

Winter Evenings:

OR,

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE AND LETTERS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR CHARLES DILLY.

M,DCC.LXXXVIII.

WINTER LITERATURE



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MCCCXXXIII.

C O N T E N T S

O F T H E

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Winter

Winter Evenings:
OR,
LUCUBRATIONS
ON
LIFE and LETTERS.
BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAP. I.

*Of the Names introduced by English Writers to
distinguish the Characters which they describe.*

SIR,

SOMEBODY, I think, has very properly taken notice of the odd names which Dr. Watts has used to distinguish those characters, which he introduces to illustrate his moral instructions. The characters are commonly grave; but the names are often such as give them something of a ludicrous air. He was a man of learning, judgment, and angelic goodness; but I know not whether his *taste* in literary matters has

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not

not been too highly appreciated. I do not recollect the fictitious name which was selected as an instance of absurdity; but in looking for it, I found those of Polonides, Polyrāmus, Fluvio, and Credonius, all of which are strangely uncouth. Such are also in the same book, Jocander, Positivo, Scitorio, Scintillo, Thebaldino, Niveo, and Plumbinus.

If writers mean to give their characters the appearance of truth, they should not select ancient names for living persons, much less names formed by their own capricious invention, and such as never were given to men of any age or country. We know, indeed, that the name is a masque; but the mask of a respectable character should be neither a monster, nor a caricatura.

Ficta voluptatis causa, sint proxima veris.

Let all fiction which is intended to please, approach as nearly as possible to reality.

I own I am not pleased with the generality of our dialogue writers, who give their persons Greek and Roman names, though at the same time they make them talk like Englishmen, and allude to modern customs, manners, and places. There is an incongruity in these which lessens much of the entertainment which the dialogue might otherwise afford.

Why

Why may not modern names be admitted into modern dialogue? You will say perhaps, Palæmon and Philander, Eugenius and Eusebius, have a prettier sound than Smith, Johnson, Walker, Benson, Hudson. The Latin and Greek languages have a prettier sound than the English, and therefore you may for the same reason write the whole dialogue in the same language. It is another plea for adopting Greek and Latin names, that as the Romans did not use the ceremonious salutations of the moderns, a great deal of trouble is avoided by omitting the unmeaning modes of address, Sir, Madam, Your Grace, and My Lord, which some imagine necessary when they introduce a conversation between such personages as Mr. Smith, Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Melvill, Lord Clarendon, and the Duke of Kent.

But I think these ceremonious appellations may be omitted with less violation of probability and propriety than is caused by introducing Greeks and Romans talking about the doctrines of Christianity, the laws of our country, and other subjects, on which they could not be made to converse without a violent anachronism.

When the subject relates entirely to antiquity, antient names are not improper; indeed, as the ancients may be supposed better acquainted with

such subjects than the moderns, the mind is pleased with the propriety of introducing them as the interlocutors.

But while the matter is good, it is not right to cavil at trifles which are no more than forms. Perhaps my remarks are hypercritical : that they may not be tedious, I will here conclude them.

I am, S I R,

to borrow one of Dr. Watts's names,

Your humble Servant,

POLYRAMUS.

S I R,

I am a great lover of learning, but not having had the advantage of a liberal education, I am totally unacquainted with the learned languages ; and I lament the defect as a real misfortune. I hear much of their excellence, and you may suppose it a great mortification to me, that I am unable to read those books which have been celebrated as the finest productions of the human intellect. I endeavour to compensate my defect by reading English authors ; but I often stumble upon Latin mottoes and sentences, which I suppose to contain some jewel, too precious to be exposed to
vulgar

vulgar view, and locked up in a casket of which I have not the key.

But I am not only puzzled and mortified with mottoes and sentences which I do not understand, but often with odd names of characters in moral writers, and of persons who converse in fictitious dialogues, which, I have no doubt, contain some significant meaning, which I am at a loss to unriddle.

Dr. More in his dialogues introduces the following persons; Philotheus, Bathynous, Sophron, Philopolis, Euister, Hylobares, and *Cuphophron*. Every one of these is expressive of the character introduced; but I should have been quite in the dark about them, and have wondered at their oddity, if the Doctor had not obligingly explained their meaning in one of the first pages in his volume. I wish the example had been followed by many others, who introduce me into the company of persons whose characters I do not know, because I do not understand the meaning of their crabbed names.

I humbly conceive that it would be quite as well if writers suffered the characters to open themselves to the reader in the course of the conversation; and I see no good reason why christian

and surnames of honest Englishmen, may not be given to persons who come forward to talk on subjects which they must understand far better than the wisest of the antients; I mean such as Dr. More discusses, the attributes of God, and his Providence in this world; but in truth, I find, on enquiry, that these names are not the names of antients. They occur not in history, but are compounded of words that never met before, to express ideas which can only be understood by those who are acquainted with the learned languages. Such names appear to me to have no more propriety than some of those which in the times of fanaticism were used by the Puritans, such as, Praise-God Barebones, Make-peace Heaton, Kill-sin Pimple, and Fly-debate Roberts; the names of a jury impannelled in Suffex during the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell.

I acknowledge, however, that the antient and high sounding names adopted in English dialogues, give a dignity to the discourse; but I, who am a mere Englishman, wish to see Englishmen introduced without being ashamed of their names, and do not know why the names of Clarendon, Temple, Raleigh, and a thousand others equally well sounding, might not answer the purpose as well as names borrowed from Greece and Rome: And, as to the significancy of the above mentioned

ed

ed compound appellations, what should I be the wiser without an explanatory table for such names as those in Dr. More's list? What must I think of *Cuphophron*? I should not know the sense; and I am sure I could not admire the sound. Few Gothic names are of more difficult pronunciation.

But I ought not to judge, as I profess myself no scholar. I only submit to you my complaint as an English reader. I shall be much obliged to you to desire gentlemen who write dialogues, and introduce strange names as exemplifications of their instruction, either to give modern names, or such as are known in history, or else to add an explanatory table.

I am, SIR, Your's, &c.

AN ENGLISH READER.

C H A P. II.

*Of Caligula's Attempt to abolish the Works of
Homer, Virgil, and Livy.*

THE tyrants who oppressed Rome in the decline of her empire were not satisfied with depriving men of their civil rights, but often attempted to chain the mind in servitude, and to domineer with absolute controul, where they certainly had no claim to pre-eminence, in the republic of literature. One of the most singular and barbarous attempts upon record was that of Caligula, who formed a design of abolishing the poems of Homer, and had nearly accomplished his purpose of banishing from all the libraries of his time, the busts and the works of Livy and Virgil. He could not bear that the noble efforts of genius, breathing a spirit of liberty and virtue, which he could not but hate, should continue to diffuse such sentiments as must teach all who imbibed them to detest him as a monster.

The following is the account given by Suetonius: " Cogitavit etiam de Homeri carminibus abolendis. Cur enim sibi non licere, dicens, quod Platoni licuisset, qui eum a civitate, quam constituebat, ejecerit? Sed Virgiliis

“ gillii et Titi Livii scripta et imagines, paulum
 “ abfuit, quin ex omnibus bibliothecis amoveret ;
 “ quorum alterum ut nullius ingenii, minimæque
 “ doctrinæ ; alterum, ut verbosum, in historiâ
 “ negligentemque carpebat *.”

Flagitious as was his reign, I know not whether any thing he could do, would have been more injurious to mankind than if he had succeeded in extinguishing these glorious lights. The atrocious malignity of his immoral and tyrannical actions was confined to his own age, but this would have descended to posterity, and continued the effects of his despotism long after the great teacher Death had humbled his pride, by reducing him to the dust, not distinguishable from the poorest wretch whom his insolence despised, and his cruelty persecuted. Indeed his design was impracticable, for, with all his power, he could not have prevented some votary of taste and genius from preserving in secret the noble reliques of these illustrious ornaments of human nature.

I have no doubt but the same disposition which could form a wish to abolish Homer, would have rejoiced, if it had been possible, to have

* Sueton. Calig. cap. 34.

extinguished the sun, or to have dried up the ocean. Such tyranny exhibits a melancholy monument of human wickedness, and at the same time furnishes a salutary warning to the world not to trust enormous power in the hands of a fellow creature. Human nature retains so much of inherent malignity, that he who possesses power uncontrouled will be in imminent danger of imitating and nearly resembling the parent of all evil.

Dic mihi, si fueris, tu leo qualis eris.

But the wicked never want the artifice of giving to their malice some colourable pretence. Caligula alleged that he should be justified in the abolition of Homer by the example of Plato, who banished the poets from his imaginary republic. But what was Plato's motive? a desire to preserve the morals of youth, whose ideas he thought were corrupted and distorted by an initiation into the strange mysteries of fiction, instead of the knowledge of substantial and practical realities. He did not mean to abolish their works, or to preclude men, whose reason was mature, from the study of them. He only thought, as many others have thought, that on the minds of young men, the slaves of passion and fancy, they might operate in the same manner as novels and romances have been observed to
do,

do, in firing the passions and misleading the imagination. But was Caligula's motive for their expulsion a fear that they might diffuse corruption? No such apprehension ever agitated his bosom. His fear was lest they should teach a virtue to which he could never attain, and raise a spirit inimical to his manners, his person, and his tyranny. He must have known that, among all the persons described by Homer, he was worthy only to be ranked with such wretches as Thersites. Before himself could shine, he knew that all true glory must be shaded, as the sun must retire, before the feeble light, which arises from a foul vapour, can become visible.

But he assigns a reason for the expulsion of Virgil and Livy. Virgil, says he, has no genius, and a very small share of learning; and Livy is verbose in his style, and negligent in his narrative.

Caligula must be excepted against as an incompetent judge both of learning and genius; for it requires a considerable share of both to form a just opinion of the degree in which they are possessed by a writer. If Virgil had not genius, he would not, I think, have continued so long the delight and admiration of all who have read his works with taste. He has Longinus's

criterion of genius, the united voice of various ages and nations, in his favour. He has Caligula, and a few other men of debauched taste, against him, which is almost as great an honour as the general approbation.

The truth is, he has a remarkably happy union of genius with learning; and he has also a judgment to guide him in the conduct of both, with that propriety which enables him to delight at once the reason and the fancy. Genius without learning often delights the fancy, but the judgment must in the mean time sleep, or the pleasure will be diminished and interrupted.

Whoever has read the works of Virgil in the excellent edition of Heyne will want no argument to convince him that Virgil did not deserve the stigma which Caligula would have fixed on him,—*minimæ doctrinæ*; and whoever has sensibility will feel the falsehood of the detracting spirit that dared to assert of him that he was *nullius ingenii*. It must ever be a singular honour to suffer detraction from such men as Caligula.

It is very easy to assign a reason for his dislike of Livy. A most arbitrary tyrant and most profligate man could not but wish to destroy the works of an historian who exhibits the assertors

of liberty, and the virtuous patriots of a virtuous republic, in such colours as must at once excite love and lead to imitation. Caligula's charge of verbosity in the style of Livy is utterly groundless. He expresses himself with a noble brevity, and with that concise dignity which evinced that he had a Roman soul; such a soul as was adequate to the noble undertaking of a Roman history. The other charge, that of negligence in his account of facts, originated from the malignant wish of the tyrant to diminish the credit of an historian who related deeds of so bright a splendour, as must render the page in which his own should be recorded, foul indeed. Time has unfortunately done much to accomplish the nefarious wish of Caligula, in the destruction of the works of Livy; but enough remains to delight every man of taste, and warm the bosom with magnanimous sentiments, and the generous ardour of public virtue.

It is greatly to be lamented when Princes, instead of patronizing genius, endeavour to repress its aspiring vigour. Such a conduct arises in such men as Caligula from envy and malice; but a neglect of genius is occasioned in others by ignorance, and a total deficiency of taste for works which the world applauds. Even Hadrian, we are told, wished to abolish Homer's
works,

works, and substitute in his room the poems of one Antimachus. He thought it was time to leave off admiring old Homer, that he had been admired long enough, and that he should gratify the passion for novelty by introducing in his place a modern versifier. He puts one in mind of the rough warrior who told the captain, to whose care he had consigned some fine pictures which he had taken as spoils, that if they were lost or injured they should be renewed at his expence.

Men of sense look down upon such emperors, when they dictate in matters of taste, with as much contempt as the emperors can do on the meanest of their vassals. When learning is diffused throughout a nation, the works of taste and genius will flourish independently of the smiles or the frowns of princes.

C H A P. III.

Of some Passages in Erasmus on the Happiness of Marriage.—Remarks.

AMONG the marks of modern profligacy may be enumerated the reluctance with which young men enter the marriage state. Their affections are in vain solicited by any charms besides those of lucre. The times seem to be past, when in the prime of life virtuous love led young men to select a companion for the amiable qualities of her mind and person, independently of all pecuniary considerations. The loveliest of women may now pine in hopeless celibacy; for, if they cannot purchase a husband as they would purchase a gown, with the contents of their purse, they may live and die without one. In vain has nature given them the vermal cheek, and the eye of sensibility, if fortune has refused her more brilliant gifts. Young men gaze indeed like children at the peacock, and turn away without any tenderness of sentiment, or at least without any wish to possess the beauty which they admire, on honourable conditions.

It is indeed observable that young men of the present age too often consider marriage as an evil
in

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in itself, and only to be engaged in when the pecuniary advantages attending it afford a compensation. For the sake of the good, it seems, they sometimes condescend to accept the evil. A most insulting opinion, and no less unreasonable and untrue than contumelious; for marriage, prudent and affectionate marriage, is favourable to every virtue that can contribute to the comfort and happiness of the individual, while it most essentially serves society.

I was thinking on this subject when I accidentally opened a little book by Erasmus on the Art of Letter Writing. He gives models of letters on various subjects, and, under the appearance of affording hints in a didactic way for the use of students, contrives to recommend several most useful things with great force of argument, and in a very entertaining manner. I happened to open the book in the place where he is writing a persuasive to marriage, and I was so well pleased with several of his topics, that I determined to select a few of them for the consideration of my readers. I mean not literally to translate, or to give the whole of his persuasive. There are parts in it which one cannot entirely approve, but there are others which every heart, that is not spoiled by fashion and false philosophy, must admire.

Is there any friendship, says he, among mortals, comparable to that between man and wife? For the love of you she has ceased to value the tenderness of parents, brothers, sisters; to you alone she looks for happiness, on you she depends, with you she wishes to live and to die.

Are you rich? you have one who will endeavour to preserve and to increase your property. Are you in narrow circumstances? you have one who will assist you faithfully in the pursuit of gain. If you enjoy prosperity, she will double your happiness; if you are in adversity, she will console you, she will sit by your side, she will wait upon you with all the assiduity of love, and only wish that she could appropriate the misfortune which gives you pain. Is there any pleasure to be compared with an union of hearts like this?

I must add the next passage in his own words.

Si domi agis, adest quæ solitudinis tædium depellat; si foris, est quæ discedentem osculo prosequatur, absentem desideret, redeuntem læta excipiat.

She is the sweet companion of your youth, and the pleasant solace of your old age.

What can be more odious (he proceeds) than that man, who, as if he were born for himself,
lives

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lives for himself, heaps up riches for himself, spares for himself, spends for himself, loves no human creature but himself, is beloved by none.

How will you value your happiness (he adds)

—————Ubi quis tibi parvulus aula,
Luferit Æneas.

qui tuos tuæque conjugis vultus referat, qui te
BLANDA BALBUTIE PATREM APPELLITET.

I know, says he, that you will object that all this happiness depends upon the disposition of the wife more than on the marriage state. A marriage may be thus happy if the wife be good; but suppose her ill-natured, suppose her unchaste, and suppose the children undutiful. Believe me, the bad husband usually makes the bad wife. You certainly have it in your power to chuse a good one; but what if she should afterwards be spoiled? Erasmus confidently replies, A good wife may indeed be spoiled by a bad husband, but a bad wife is usually reformed by a good one. *FALSO UXORES ACCUSAMUS.* No body, he assures us (I am afraid too confidently), ever had a bad wife but by his own fault. And with respect to children, good children, says he, are usually born of good parents; but however they may have been born, they commonly become just such as they are made by education.

But

But why, continues he, do you so anxiously enumerate the inconveniencies of marriage, just as if celibacy were totally free from them, or as if any mode of human life were not subject to evil and misfortune. If you would have no inconvenient circumstances in your state, you must leave this life. *Sin intra humanam conditionem animum contineas, nihil est conjugali vita, neque tutius, neque tranquillius, neque jucundius, neque amabilius, neque felicius.* But if one can restrain one's desires within the boundaries of happiness which belong to human nature, there is no state safer, more tranquil, pleasanter, lovelier, nor happier than the conjugal.

Though Erasmus is seeking hints to supply the young letter writer with matter for his compositions, yet I cannot but think that he spoke his honest sentiments, because he speaks with warmth, and, I believe, meant obliquely to censure those unnatural institutions of the Romish church, which tend to discourage marriage. He is very copious on the subject, and advances many arguments which I have not room to transcribe, and which indeed will appear to much greater advantage in the original. I must not conceal that he has also a dissuasive from marriage; but it really contains no argument which is valid, or which is worthy of repetition.

I am

I am of opinion, that the reluctance of young men of fortune to enter into the state arises not from any settled conviction of the unreasonableness of the institution, but from profligacy, thoughtlessness, false ideas of pleasure, and a want of rational ideas of human life and the nature of human happiness. But, whatever is the cause, the effect is certainly unhappy both to men and women. Men, indeed, in consequence of their libertinism, gratify their natural desires in the haunts of vice; and so much the worse, for they thus add sin to misery. Women are often kept in a state of celibacy, for which nature never designed them, and to which, I may say, without attributing to them indecency or immodesty, they are in general not much inclined. It is happy, however, that reserve and virtue so far prevail among them, as for the most part to prevent them from forming improper connexions, in consequence of being prevented from making a matrimonial alliance by the disinclination of the men. It is to be hoped they will still preserve their dignity by preserving their innocence; but their case is hard, and nothing which a wise legislature can do to alleviate it should be omitted. Many nations have taken great pains to encourage marriage, ours places some obstacles in its way, which, though often salutary in the higher classes, are perhaps injurious in the lower.

A reforma-

A reformation of manners, among the young men who lead the fashion, would contribute most to the encouragement of marriage; for where libertinism greatly prevails, celibacy, which is favourable to it, will be predominant. Perhaps, if women were instructed in useful as well as ornamental arts, and were less expensive in dress and diversions, the rest might be left to the natural operation of their beauty and agreeable accomplishments. As the small-pox is in great measure defeated, they certainly never appeared more beautiful than in the present time, and accomplishments were never pursued with more ardour, or advanced to higher perfection.

C H A P. IV.

Of drinking Health at Table.

Tardè Cyathos mihi das; cedò sanè: benè mihi; benè vobis.

PLAUTUS.

S I R,

I LATELY addressed to you a few observations on the omission of grace at table, and I now beg leave to add some remarks on another omission which fashion seems to recommend, but which is countenanced neither by the examples of the antients, nor by reason, nor by a sense of propriety. I observed, on my visit to my old friend in London, that the friendly practice of drinking health at dinner was in most of the fashionable families very much on the decline, and in many totally omitted. Indeed the omission arises from a principle which seems very much to prevail in the present age, and which aims at the abolition of all forms and ceremonies, as meaning nothing, and at the same time giving trouble and excluding ease. Forms and ceremonies undoubtedly have their utility, or they would not have been universally retained in every age and nation which history has recorded. But allowing some forms to be without meaning, I cannot suppose,

suppose, unless I throw a severer reflection on the friendship and hospitality of modern times than I chuse, that the drinking of health is, without exception, a senseless and empty ceremony. A man of a warm and friendly heart usually feels a sentiment of cordial kindness when he holds the cup of refreshment in his hand, and wishes health and happiness to his friends who are partaking around him of the same innocent and necessary pleasure.

The custom prevailed among the Greeks, who carried the elegance which they displayed in the polite arts to the table and social circle, assembled to enjoy the pleasures of the palate and of discourse. Homer, indeed, has given the model in the first book of the Iliad, who says of the gods at their feast,

Χρυσείος δεπέσσι
Δειδέχαι' ἀλλήλους.

The manner of drinking to each other resembled what is called among us *pledging*. The person who drank to his friend was said *προπίνω*, or to drink first. He drank a part of the cup, and then handed the rest to the friend whom he had named. The words which passed on the occasion were *προπίνω σοι καλως*, to which the person

person saluted λαμβάνω ἀπό σου ηδews, which may be thus freely translated. I have the honour to drink to you.—I pledge you with pleasure.

It was also the custom, after due respect paid to the gods, to drink to absent friends; and, as an emblem of sincerity, it was established as a law never to dilute the wine drunk on this occasion.

I shall not trouble you with various proofs that the custom of drinking health is justified by the example of the politest people of antiquity. It would be easy to collect them from the writers on antiquities; but the instance alleged is sufficient for my purpose, and will serve to confute those who hint that the custom is unpolite.

There is surely something peculiarly brutal in sitting down to meals without ever thinking of God or man, neglecting the grace, and omitting the form of wishing health and happiness to those who sit at the same table. We have seen that it is contrary to the practice of antiquity, and of almost all people in the world, who, though they varied in the forms, agreed in the essential points, in giving glory to God on high, and testifying good will towards men.

Your's, &c.

A RATIONAL FORMALIST.

The omission of drinking health is by no means general; but as it has been countenanced at the tables of persons of fashion, it may probably descend to their imitators in lower life, and in time become universal. My correspondent has therefore very properly expressed his disapprobation of it. It certainly displays something of selfishness, and it is contrary to the general sense of the most enlightened and polished people. It can only be justified with certain qualifications and restrictions. It is troublesome, in a large company, to drink the health of every guest respectively, and troublesome formalities ought not to be scrupulously adhered to, when they contravene the very purpose of the meeting, which was certainly to promote cheerfulness and ease.

But forms, not evidently and intolerably burthen some and foolish, are certainly to be retained, as they constitute those outworks which often preserve the interior parts from assault and destruction. The drinking of health is significant of that good will which ought to prevail among fellow creatures, happily enjoying the bounty of their common Parent and Creator; and though it may be attended with a little trouble, yet there is a great decency and propriety in it, and to bear the trouble may be considered as an exercise of benevolence.

I cannot help expressing a sentiment of pity, or rather of contempt, for persons who think to recommend themselves as genteel and superior to the vulgar, merely by such easy means as the omission of decent and reasonable ceremonies. I suppose they mean to claim the merit of being superior to prejudice; but I think they are under a very silly prejudice when they think themselves wise enough to be justified in contradicting the common sense and common practice of mankind; and when they suppose singularity alone can give them merit, and cause them justly to plume themselves on conscious superiority.

Observe at table that fine lady, and fine gentleman by her side. How they lift their eyebrows, and smile with ineffable contempt. Heavens! has there been any moral turpitude, or any gross violation of decency committed? None. But, you must know, that yonder gentleman, who is just arrived from the country, where he has resided for a long time, drank to the lady in small beer, and stood up to say grace, and to make a bow to the master of the house. He might have sworn profanely, talked indecently, or drank intemperately, and if he had but the cant of fashion, they who now despise him would have admired and caressed him as a *good man*.

C H A P. V.

Of trifling Amusements as the Resource of old Age.

IT seems to be a natural conclusion from the shortness of life, that none of it should be thrown away ; and it is therefore thought wonderful that there should be many contrivances to abbreviate the duration of what is confessed already to be too much circumscribed. Now pastimes of all kinds are considered as contrivances to wear away time without reflection, and are therefore censured by severe philosophy, as arguing absurdity in man, who is forever lamenting the brevity of his existence. But, as man is constituted, it must be denied that the time spent in amusement is always thrown away ; and, perhaps, it will be found to lengthen rather than to abbreviate our duration.

It contributes, when under the restraint of moderation, to confirm health and exhilarate the spirits ; both which effects not only become causes of long life, but also enable a man to act with vigour and efficacy in the employments of a profession, and in the common duties of society. It not only renders life more comfortable, but more useful.

It is, however, true, that in the vigorous seasons of youth and health, some serious and momentous employment should be engaged in, which may serve society, advance the interests of a family, or elevate the meritorious individual in the ranks of civil life.

But in old age, when these ends shall have been accomplished, and * infirmities begin to encrease, the active mind will still require an object, and the object ought to be of such a kind as agitates moderately, not like the storm, but like the gentle breeze of a fine summer evening.

Hobby-horses are very desirable at all ages; but necessary in old age, when the sources of amusement begin to fail. It was this which induced the sensible and experienced Geron to keep an aviary. He had relinquished a busy life, and retired from London to a little country town, where, though there was an agreeable neighbourhood, there were few diversions but those of cards; which, notwithstanding he liked them very well, could not occupy all his time and attention. They are chiefly a winter and an

* Solve senescentem maturè sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus et ilia ducat.

evening amusement, and he wanted something, besides reading, for the summer and for his mornings. He therefore built a little room in his garden, and fitted it up with admirable contrivance as an aviary. The building of it, the conveniences, and the improvements, which he was continually adding, caused him much pleasure : and it soon became an object of high ambition to breed the most beautiful Canary birds. He succeeded in his attempts, and more than once carried the prize given by a society of bird-fanciers for producing a bird of the finest plumage. He taught many bulfinches to pipe a tune, and made them presents to his friends as instances of singular favor. He reared nightingales from the nest, and attended them with all a parent's solicitude. The delicate, the elegant woodlark was one of his first favourites, and he listened with fresh delight when his birds warbled their morning melody, which he fancifully considered as songs of gratitude and love to himself in return for protection.

But that he might secure variety, which is necessary to add a zest to amusement, he has added several other hobby-horses to this his first favourite. He has acquired a taste for tulips, and prides himself on making a more beautiful display of this gaudy flower in the month of

May than any florist in his vicinity. I called it a gaudy flower ; but I speak like an inelegant spectator when I use a contemptuous epithet in mentioning it : for, though to a common eye a bed of tulips presents only a glare of vivid colours, to a connoisseur it exhibits peculiar elegance as well as finery. Geron views them with the affection and complacency of a lover.

The garden affords him many sources of amusement. He attends not indeed to the olivory, and his strength will not permit him to take an active part in the labours of horticulture. But he has a small green-house, to every part of which he gives a daily attention ; and its various beauty amply repays him, as indeed nothing is more grateful, in return for care and labour, than the vegetable world.

To add to his amusements, he has stocked a fish-pond in a meadow adjoining to his little garden ; and, instead of taking out all the fish at once, by emptying the pond or drawing it, which is the usual practice of country gentlemen, he makes a rule that no fish shall be caught out of it but by angling, which he thinks the only fair method of fishing among those who fish for diversion. His strength will not permit him to follow the piscatory sport in the river, as he
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can neither stand long, nor walk a great way ; and he has the sense, wherever he cannot accommodate the nature of the diversion to himself, to submit himself to the nature of the diversion.

He has many little amusements in the house, as well as in the aviary, the garden, and canal. As he is properly disposed in religious matters, the reading of the Scriptures, with a comment, and of pious books of the best characters, fills up both agreeably and usefully an hour or two every day ; but more especially when the weather is rainy, or in any respect inclement.

Visits, and cards in moderation, contribute to enliven his time in an agreeable vicissitude ; and the consequence of his wise distribution of his leisure hours, he enjoys a chearfulness which contributes, perhaps, more than any thing else, to health and longevity.

His neighbour Bibo ridicules his amusements as trifling and puerile. Bibo is nearly as old as Geron ; but he is not yet free from youthful vanity. He is an old beau, sportsman, gamester, and bottle companion ; but his infirmities often prevent him from acting in these characters ; and when on a good day (as he calls it,

whenever he is tolerably well) he attempts them, he never acquits himself to his own satisfaction. Old age, and the depredations of time, are his great complaint. He has no resource in himself, and cultivates no taste for domestic and harmless diversions. He mopes over the fire in the morning, and the bottle in the afternoon. Melancholy and bodily disease, encreased by indolence and excess, accelerate the evils, and aggravate the pains of age.

How happy would Bibb have been if he had condescended to give up the gravity of the gamester, and the affectation of the beau, and adopted a taste for some innocent hobby-horse, which he now despises as too childish and unimportant to deserve his notice.

C H A P. VI.

Of the little Arts practised to gain the Appearance of Consequence at public Places, &c.

SUCH is the natural pride of the human heart, that there is scarcely any trifling distinction which can attract notice that will not be pursued with eagerness, and fill the possessor's bosom with self-esteem.

One of the easiest, and therefore the commonest method of drawing attention by trifles, is that of talking loud at all places of public resort. There is something so spirited in it, so charmingly careless, and it gives such an air of superiority, by seeming to despise all the hearers as if they were no more than stocks and stones, that it seldom fails of exciting not only notice, but some degree of admiration.

I have heard many a fine gentleman and lady, while they were strutting up and down a crowded walk, question each other on the last night's ball, or their engagements to dinner, in a voice so loud as silenced the rest of the company, and caused a general hum of enquiry, Who are these? Thus the end was answered. The spec-

fators were awestruck and brow-beaten, and the happy pair marched off in triumph, like a king and queen of Brentford, till the next morning, when they returned to make new conquests. From their volubility and vehement loudness, they acquired, among many silly listeners, the character of people of infinite sense and spirit.

Another method of gaining notice and admiration, is to swear and swagger at inns, or at any other place where we are among our inferiors, or are unknown. It is, to be sure, wonderful to observe how respectful a reception he meets with, who, with a cockade in his hat, which is also judiciously cocked over his eye, with a stick in his hand, and an oath in his mouth, enters an inn and calls about him with a voice like that of the men who cry peas and beans in the streets of London. There have been generals, admirals, colonels, and captains, who never appeared so formidable, and displayed so much prowess, as in storming an inn in a country town. And the petty gentry, who imitate such heroes, consider themselves as personages of great consequence when they break the bell wire by the violence of their ringing, frighten the landlady with their fierce looks, send the waiters scampering like men beside themselves, and, with their oaths, set the

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the whole house, yards, and stables in an uproar.

Knocking vehemently at a door, especially if it be done according to the latest method invented by people of fashion in the squares, adds very considerably to personal importance.

Singularity in dress is one of the commonest modes of seeking distinction; but by singularity I do not mean a deviation from the established fashion, but an obedience to it carried to an extreme. An enormous pair of buckles has given many a young man a degree of confidence which no learning or virtue which he possessed could ever have supplied. A hat, a coat, a shoe, of a shape, or size, or colour, exceeding the ordinary bounds, have fixed the eyes of a whole assembly, and gratified the ambitious wearer with the most heartfelt satisfaction.

Some, rather than not be noticed at all, will endeavour to draw the eyes of their fellow creatures upon them by such profusion and expences, as cause an execution in their houses, and force them to elope. Hunted by bailiffs and creditors, it is still some consolation to them that they are the reigning topic. Vices are often practised with a desire of being rendered remarkable;

and many plume themselves as persons of the first consequence, if their profligacy causes them to become the subjects of paragraphs in a newspaper.

Vanity indeed operates with so violent a force on some minds, that it seems to contradict itself, and defeat its own purpose; for, in pursuit of notice and distinction, it will even industriously seek contempt.

As the desire of fame or distinction seems natural in man, I contend not against it; but I wish it to operate in urging to acts of singular beneficence and social utility, rather than spend its force in trifles, follies, vanities, and vices.

Of the greater part of these ambitious persons whom I have just described, it may, I believe, be said that they would act wisely to avoid, instead of seeking distinction, for they seem to be of that character to which the emphatical words of an elegant political writer may most justly be applied—"a character which will only pass without censure, when it passes without observation."

If men find themselves insensibly impelled by the ambition of their nature to seek distinction,
let

let them learn to seek it by arts and virtues which embellish life, and diffuse happiness or convenience through the ranks of society. If they cannot do this, let them contentedly acquiesce in an innocent obscurity.

C H A P. VII.

*Of making a splendid Appearance for the Sake of
obtaining Success in a Trade or Profession.*

———Purpura vendet
Causidicum; vendunt amethystina. Juv.

IN the eye of reason there is certainly no necessary connexion between ostentation and excellence. Can the keeping of a chariot be a proof of pre-eminence of knowledge? Certainly not. But such is the world, that the physician on foot stands no chance of being employed if his rival rides in his chariot.

The preference of the medical professor who makes a fashionable appearance to him that does not, has been always remarkable; so much so, that it is almost a proverbial question, What is a doctor without his chariot? Formerly large wigs, gold headed canes, full trimmed coats, and solemn looks, were considered as natural signs of profound knowledge. They indeed are voluntarily laid aside by the gentlemen themselves; who seem to think it no disadvantage to appear young in person, and easy in manners. But still the appearance of fashionable life, of servants and equipage,

equipage, is a very powerful recommendation to favour.

The same unreasonable association of the idea of superior excellence, wherever a splendid appearance is made, seems visible in almost every other art, trade, and profession.

And this it is which forms one of the most frequent excuses, in young persons, for launching out, as they call it, or living beyond their income.

In the lower orders of mercantile life, a young man begins trade with his little patrimony, or with the gift of a living parent, who, perhaps, distresses himself to raise a sum which, though moderate, might, under proper management, grow, like a handful of seed, to a large quantity. A shop, or rather a *warehouse* (for, as Juvenal says,

————— hic vivimus ambitiosi

Paupertate omnes —————

and every thing must now have a magnificent name), is hired at a considerable rent. It must, in the first place, be fitted up not only neatly and conveniently (for neatness and convenience are mean ideas), but elegantly, and in the newest taste.

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The door posts are adorned with sculpture, and the name and trade exhibited on a tablet adorned with a profusion of gilding and paint. The counters, the drawers, the shelves, are mahogany; and the master and mistress are every day attired by the most fashionable hair-dresser, and descend (which is but rarely) from the sumptuous dining-room to stand behind the counter, just as if they were going into a drawing-room, or the presence chamber.

Connections are sought with the utmost diligence. To promote them, visits are paid and received with all the formality of fashion. The glass in the dining-room is stuck round with gilt cards of invitation to dinners, suppers, balls, and assemblies.

Well; all this is very pleasing; but how goes on business in the shop,—in the warehouse? I beg pardon. O, the scrubs mind that. Mr. and Mrs. Diaper are too much engaged in dressing in the morning and visiting in the afternoon to mind the subordinate business of the shop. The clerk, the journeyman, the apprentice, and the porter are hired purposely for that business; but let Mr. and Mrs. Diaper alone; they know what they are about, they are promoting trade, by making connexions and *cutting a figure.*

a figure. There is no succeeding in the present days without cutting a figure.

But the misfortune is, every one is *cutting a figure* to the utmost extent of their pecuniary abilities; and the connexions which Mr. and Mrs. Diaper make are themselves making connexions for the sake of advancing their interest. None of them have a fund sufficient to support the expences of the fashionable life which they affect; and, in the course of a few years, they all, in their turn, *cut a figure* in the London Gazette.

But in higher life, in professions and employments which might justly claim a right to genteel life, it is usual to go beyond the line of moderation and propriety, with the delusive idea that the greater figure a man makes in the external circumstances of a fine house, a luxurious table, a splendid equipage, a tribe of servants, the more likely he is to succeed, and to be aggrandized. In the mean time he himself is sap-
ping the foundation of his own greatness, and the visionary fabric soon falls to rise no more.

These ambitious persons, who hope to raise themselves by affecting a rank they cannot support, are well described in the celebrated fable of
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the frog and the ox. They and their families, after a short struggle, become ridiculous and pitiable. But the misfortune is not confined to themselves; for though their magnificent appearance gained no credit with their superiors, yet it caused them to be trusted by their inferiors, by poor tradesmen, who supplied them with many articles both necessary and superfluous, in the hope of serving themselves and feeding their families. These are usually great sufferers; for being poor and of little consequence, they stand the worst chance of having their demands satisfied. The debts of honour, and the expences of fashion, must first be paid; but the butcher, the baker, and the brewer may come in perhaps for sixpence in the pound, when their customers are gone abroad to live genteelly at Lisle or Bruffells.

To make that appearance which our rank requires, provided our purse can pay the expences, argues a proper spirit. But it is surely folly, as well as wrong and robbery, in pursuit of a phantom, to expend on luxury and vanity, the property of those who, in the course of their honest callings, have given us confidence, and entrusted us with what was necessary to our subsistence, or what we considered as conducive to our prosperity.

Children

Children brought up to expences and habits which they cannot support, often rue the folly of parents, who, catching at the shadow of honour or wealth, let go the substance, their own happy and independent competency.

C H A P. VIII.

*Of Impudence as a Recommendation of Boys, and
a Proof of Parts in them.*

I WAS once visiting in a family at Christmas, when the eldest son, a fine boy about twelve years old, came home from school for the holidays. As he entered the parlour, which was full of company, instead of paying his compliments to them with the ease and sufficiency of a master of the ceremonies, he hung down his head, blushed violently, and seemed lost in confusion.

Good God! exclaimed his mother, I shall never be able to endure this. Is this the education of Dr. ——'s school. I do insist upon it, my dear, turning to her husband, that Henry shall go no more to a school where, after three years, he has not learned how to make his *entree* into a room with tolerable decency! What will become of my poor child! I shall be ashamed of him—a disgrace, a downright disgrace to the family!

The boy's confusion, it may readily be conceived, was not diminished by this passionate
and

and unmotherly reception. He burst into tears, and was immediately ordered to leave the room. After a few remarks on the awkwardness of schoolboys, the company sat down to whist, and poor Henry was sent to bed.

I had an opportunity very soon after of enquiring into the character of the boy, and I found, that so far from being stupid, as supposed by his mother, he was the very best scholar in his class, and had already written one or two pretty copies of verses on the Spring.

As I am as fond of making experiments in morals as a natural philosopher is in pneumatics, hydrostatics, or chemistry, I determined to watch the progress of the boy, and to see whether he was likely to become, as his relations hastily concluded, an awkward and stupid man. I found he continued to improve in every accomplishment at his school, for his removal from it was overruled by the advice of a sensible clergyman, who had great influence in the family. He went to the university with a great character, which he supported, and is now a very polite gentleman, an excellent scholar, and a most respectable man.

This event led me to lament the prevalence of an idea, that modesty, diffidence, or bashfulness

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ness in boys is a sign of stupidity, and on all accounts ought to be removed as soon as possible.

The finest rose that ever exhaled fragrance and expanded beauty was once a rose-bud; and had the rose-bud been torn open with violence in its state of immaturity, would it have ever become a beautiful and perfect flower?

Nature, in a state of imperfection, is not ashamed of blushing. She is conscious of her imbecillity, and is not afraid to own her diffidence; and while she labours to supply her defects, conceives none to be disgraceful that are unavoidable.

Prudence suggests the caution, that we should beware of disturbing nature in her own process, which was undoubtedly prescribed by the God of nature.

That fine sensibility which causes an efflorescence in the cheek of the schoolboy is, I think, a favourable presage of every thing amiable.

That early ripeness which displays a manliness of behaviour at the infantine age, is like every thing premature, of short continuance, and of little solidity.

But fashionable parents are disgusted with manners in their children dissimilar to their own. They are all ease and familiarity. As to diffidence and blushing, some of them had rather be convicted of an atrocious crime. But their children blush and appear awkward in a circle of polite company, that is, of company formed upon the model which happens to be the reigning taste among the rich and idle. Take the boy from his books and from his masters, if he is thus awkward; for there is no tolerating such an unlicked cub in one's presence.

Have patience, Madam, I would take the liberty of saying, the bud will expand in due time, and fruit will appear; but if you touch the bloom, in order to force it open before its time, it is very likely that you destroy the possibility of fruit.

Diffidence wears off when the mind becomes conscious of a sufficient degree of strength to support confidence. With respect to confidence without merit to support it, though often valued in the world, and particularly in the law, I hold it in great dishonour. It may push its way to employment and opulence, but it is scarcely consistent with a good mind, and without a good mind

But

mind what happiness is to be found in employment and opulence.

Sincerum est nisi vas quodcunque infundis accescit,

HOR.

People who value themselves on knowing the world are very apt to insist on effrontery as a necessary virtue to go through the world with success, or rather to recommend it as the substitute and succedaneum of every virtue. But I never hear these persons boasting of their knowledge of the world, and the value of worldly wisdom, but I think of some passages in Scripture in which it is not held in so high estimation—*The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light*; but it should be remembered, that the wisdom is not that which is from above, but that of the serpent, that of the accursed spirits, originating and terminating in evil under the fair semblance of good.

C H A P. IX.

*On Genius for Conversation being distinct from a
Genius for Composition.*

I HAVE known men remarkably lively and well informed in conversation appear to great disadvantage on committing their thoughts to paper, and others who wrote learnedly, elegantly, politely, and acutely, so dull, and apparently so weak in conversation, as to be considered as very unpleasant and uninstruative companions. And I have observed this so often, as to be led to think, what may appear paradoxical, that a genius for writing and a genius for talking are different in their nature.

It appears to me that superficial men talk most fluently, and, in mixed companies, most agreeably. They are usually gay and cheerful, for their spirits are not exhausted by deep thought, nor drawn from the things before them by absence. But gaiety and cheerfulness will give them, in the convivial hour, a charm which the profound scholar, who utters his thoughts with gravity and hesitation, can never display.

A man of a superficial mind and little genius has no diffidence arising from those delicacies

and sensibilities which often cruelly distress the really ingenious. What he thinks, or has read, or heard, he utters with the confidence of an oracle; ignorant of objections, and fearless of mistake. His confidence gives him credit. The company is always disposed to listen with attention when any man speaks with the assurance of undoubting conviction. Attention gives him additional spirits, and he begins to enjoy the greatest share of conversation as his right, and at length overpowers with volubility and emphasis the silent or gentle diffidence of modest merit.

Ignorant and superficial admirers, finding a voluble speaker just calculated for the meridian of their understandings, are highly delighted with him as a companion, and cry him up as a prodigy of parts and abilities.

Their voices uniting in his favour procure him, perhaps, some professional or official employment in which composition may be necessary. He writes; and the wonder is no more. How are the mighty fallen! *Quantum mutatus!*

Applauded in the circles of a tavern club, he ventures to publish. A fatal venture! for he who appeared, in conversation, a giant, becomes, when approached in the closet, a pigmy or Lilliputian.

I wish

I wish to prevent mistakes, by preventing the hasty formation of an idea of a man's intellectual talents or genius solely from his pleasantness or vivacity as a companion. Constant experience proves it to be a fallacious criterion. Men of great thought, solid judgment, and well-digested learning, are able indeed to speak to great advantage on great occasions; but they are not sufficiently interested in trifling or ordinary company; and without pride, or any intention to slight, naturally retreat from nonsense and levity to the pleasant indulgence of their own contemplation; therefore they say but little, and that little often from civility rather than because they are struck with what passes, or impelled to speak by the interesting nature of the question, or the manner in which it is discussed. In the mean time a feather will tickle and excite a fool.

It is wrong therefore, I conclude, to form a decisive opinion of a man's professional abilities from what appears in common conversation. The only true criterion is the exercise of those abilities in some act of the profession. Judge of the companion in company; but of the lawyer's abilities at the bar, or from his written opinion; of the clergyman's from the pulpit, or the press; of the physician's from the repeated success of ac-

tual practice; judge of the merchant from his punctuality and payments, from his behaviour and appearance at the Royal Exchange, and not from his volubility at the King's Arms or the London, nor even on the hustings and in the council-chamber of Guildhall.

It is an erroneous judgment which is often formed of children as well as men, when those are supposed to have the best parts who talk most. Excessive garrulity is certainly incompatible with solid thinking, and is the mark of that volatile and superficial turn, which, dwelling upon the surfaces of things, never penetrates deeply enough to make any valuable discoveries. But as no rule is without exceptions, some great thinkers, it must be confessed, have been also great talkers.

No one man can unite in himself every excellence. He who excels as a pleasant and lively companion may be deficient in judgment, in accuracy, in a power of attention and labour; and he who excels in these may want the versatility, the gaiety, the cheerfulness, which are necessary to render the communication of ideas in a mixed society agreeable. Men associate in the convivial hour of leisure from their professional or
commercial

commercial employment, more for the sake of passing their time with ease, and even mirth, than of being improved or lessened by the sage remarks of grave philosophy.

Addison, who could write so agreeably on all subjects, was not an entertaining companion unless the circle was select. Samuel Johnson loved company because he found himself attended to in it as an oracle of taste and wisdom, but he could not be said to possess companionable *agrément*. His character ensured him respect previously to his speaking, and what he said justified it; for it was original and solid; his authoritative tone and manner compelled acquiescence, even if conviction was not produced; but, after all, he was not what the world calls a pleasant companion. I could mention some of his contemporaries of far inferior merit, and more circumscribed reputation, who diffused joy and information wherever they went, and were beloved at the same time that they were admired. They also have written books; but their books are not to be compared to Johnson's. Their books were forgotten or despised, even while their conversation was sought and enjoyed by all ranks of people.

But as universal excellence is desirable, it seems right that men should labour to supply

every defect, and therefore I wish that writers would cultivate the art and habit of conversation, and conversers on the other hand endeavour to obtain the solidity and accuracy of writers; and thus the advantage derived to hearers and readers will be augmented.

C H A P. X.

The Hill of Life. A Vision.

A GENTLE ascent led to a lofty eminence, and on the summit was a level plain, of no great extent. The boundaries of it could not indeed easily be ascertained; for as the ascent on one side was easy and gradual, so the slope on the other continued almost imperceptible, till it terminated at once in abrupt declivity.

At the first entrance of the hill, I observed great numbers of infants crawling on beds of primroses, or sleeping on pillows formed by the moss. They frequently smiled, and their sweet countenances seemed to express a complacency and joy in the consciousness of their new existence. Many indeed wept and wailed, but their sorrow, though pungent, was short, and the sight of a pretty leaf or flower would cause a smile in the midst of their tears; so that nothing was more common than to see two drops trickling down cheeks which were dimpled with smiles. I was so delighted with the scenes of innocence, that I felt an impulse to go and play with the little tribe, when just as I was advancing, I felt a wand strike my shoulder, and turning my eyes

on one side, I beheld a venerable figure, with a white beard, and in a grey mantle elegantly thrown round him.

“ My son, said he, I see your curiosity is raised, and I will gratify it ; but you must not move from this place, which is the most advantageous spot for the contemplation of the scene before you.

“ Yon hill is the Hill of Life, a pageant which I have raised by the magic influence of this wand, to amuse you with an instructive picture.

“ The beauteous innocents whom you see at the foot of the hill present you with the idea of angels and cherubs, and of such indeed is the kingdom of Heaven. Simplicity and innocence are their amiable qualities, and the more of them they retain in their ascent, the happier and lovelier shall they be during the whole of their journey.

“ But raise your eyes a little space. You see a lively train intent to learn, under the sage instructors who accompany them, the easiest and safest way of ascending and descending the hill which lies before them. They often run from the side of their guides, and lose themselves

among the shrubs that blossom around them. Some give no ear to instruction, and consequently are continually deviating among thorns, thistles, nettles, and brambles. Their errors are at present retrievable, and few fall in the pitfalls with which the hill abounds. Joy illuminates their countenances. Theirs are the ruddy cheek, the sparkling eye, lively spirits, and unwearied activity. They retain a great share of the innocence with which they set out, and therefore they are cheerful. Envious age, if reason were mature! But folly, wantonness, forwardness of temper, and ignorance, greatly interrupt and spoil their enjoyments. Fruits of delicious taste grow around them, and flowrets of the sweetest scent and most beautiful colour spring beneath their feet. But they soon grow tired of this lower part of the hill, and ambitiously aspire at higher eminences.

“ Behold them a few paces higher. They advance with eagerness, and many of them forsake the guides which have conducted them thus far in their ascent. They hasten in their course, nor do they adhere to the direct road, but deviate without scruple. Some indeed return, but the greater part climb the hill by paths of their own choice, full of difficulty and danger. The pitfalls which are placed in every part of the hill are in this part very numerous,

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and not easily to be avoided by those who forsake the high road. There are indeed no parts of the hill in which a guide is more necessary than here; nor any in which the travellers are less inclined to seek his assistance.

“ You see the beauty of the blossoms. You hear the music of the birds. All nature seems to conspire in affording delight; but too many of the travellers preserve not that innocence and simplicity which are necessary to give a taste for the pleasures which are allowed. Instead of plucking the flowers which are known to be safe and salutary, they desire none but such as are poisonous. The aspiring nature of the travellers leads them to continue the ascent, and by this time you see they have reached the level summit, where you observe a prodigious crowd, all busy in pursuit of their several objects. Their faces are clouded with care, and in the ardour of pursuit they neglect those pleasures which lie before them. Most of them have now lost a great share of their original innocence and simplicity, and many of them have lost it entirely.

“ And now they begin to descend. Their cheerfulness and alacrity are greatly abated. Many limp, and some already crawl. The numbers diminish almost every step; for the pitfalls are multiplied

multiplied on this side of the hill, and many of the travellers have neither strength nor sagacity to avoid them. Many delightful scenes remain. Fruit in great abundance grows around them. But the greater part, you may remark, are careless of the obvious and natural pleasures which they might reach and enjoy, and are eagerly digging in the earth for yellow dust, on which they have placed an imaginary value. Behold one who has just procured a load of it, under which he is ready to sink. He totters along in haste to find a hiding-place for it; but before he has found it, himself is hidden from our eyes, for lo! while I speak, he is dropping into a pitfall. Most of his companions will follow him; but you see no one is alarmed by the example. The descent is become very steep and abrupt, and few there are who will reach the bottom of the hill. Of those few not one advances without stumbling on the edge of the pitfalls, from which he can scarcely recover his feeble foot. Ah! while I speak, they are all gone."

And is this a picture of life? said I; alas! how little do they seem to enjoy it? Surely, some error must infatuate them all. O say, that I may avoid it, and be happy.

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"My son, said my benevolent guide, do not hastily form an opinion derogatory from the value of life. It is a glorious opportunity afforded by the Creator for the acquisition of happiness. Cast your eyes on yonder plain, which lies at the bottom of the hill, and behold the horizon."

I looked, and behold a cloud tinged with purple and gold, parted in the centre, and displayed a scene at which my eyes were dazzled. I closed them awhile, to recover the power of vision, and when I opened them, I saw a figure in which majesty and benevolence were awfully united. He sat on a throne with every appearance of triumph, and at his feet lay a cross. And I heard a voice saying, "Come again, ye children of men." And lo, the plain opened in more places than I could number, and myriads of myriads started into existence, with bodies beautiful and glorious. And the voice proceeded, "In my Father's house are many mansions. Ye have all fallen short of the perfection for which ye were created; but some have been less unprofitable servants than others, and to them are allotted the more exalted places of bliss; but there remain mansions appropriated to all the sons of men. I have redeemed the very worst of them from the tyranny of death. Rise therefore to your respective mansions.

Enter

Enter into the joy of the Lord." He said, when the sound of instruments sweeter than the unpurged ear ever heard, rang throughout heaven's concave. And the glorified bodies beneath rose like the sun in the east, and took their places in the several planets which form what is called our solar system. I was transported with the sight, and was going to fall on my knees, and supplicate to be admitted among the aspiring spirits, when, to my mortification, I thought I was suddenly placed on the side of the hill, where I had to climb a steep ascent. I wept bitterly, when my guide remonstrated with me on the unreasonableness of my tears, since none were to be admitted to glory who had not travelled the journey which I had seen so many others travel. "Keep innocence, said he, do justice, walk humbly." He said no more, but, preparing to depart, touched me with his rod, and I awoke.

C H A P. XI.

On the prevailing Idea that moderate Learning and Abilities are sufficient for a Clergyman.

Επιστημη Επιστημων.

NAZIANZEN.

Ex quovis Ligno fit Mercurius.

IF there happen to be a boy in a family unlikely, from deficiency of parts, to make his way in the world, he is commonly selected by his prudent parents for the church ; but the idea that little more is requisite to form a clergyman than a black coat and a good living, is so dishonourable to the religious establishment that I shall think myself very properly employed in controverting its truth.

I acknowledge that honesty without learning and abilities is a better qualification for the sacred profession than learning and abilities without honesty ; but I contend that they are all three indispensibly necessary in every one who enters the profession, with ideas superior to those of an ensign when he obtains a pair of colours, or a midshipman when he procures a commission ; or indeed of a tradesman when he hires a shop, or of a mechanic and labourer when they

they undertake a job with no other view than to earn the hire.

If, indeed, a man is awkward and unskilful in the practice of a mechanical art, few or none employ him, and himself alone is the only sufferer ; but it happens in the church, that he who has neither learning nor abilities often has the most money, with which himself or his friends purchase him an ecclesiastical employment ; and they who are immediately concerned in the manner in which he acquits himself in it have it not in their power to eject him for disability, or to find convenient opportunities of supplying his defects by having recourse to a substitute. They must be contented to be instructed by his precept and example ; for, however deficient and erroneous, these are the best they can procure in the legal and regular course.

But if the care of a parish, and that a very large one, be a most important charge, if the moral and spiritual safety of thousands may depend on the parson's exertions, surely it is criminal in parents to select the least able and promising among their children to fill this office.

But I know it will be urged, and with great appearance of reason, that in this age, when
printed

printed sermons abound, it is easy to select proper ones without danger of detection, and that if the clergyman reads them and the prayers audibly and distinctly in the church, and maintains a decent character out of it, he is a no less useful and accomplished parish priest than if he had the learning and abilities of a Clarke, a Tillotson, a Sherlock, a Secker, or a Jortin.

It is very true, that by reading the pious discourses of others properly, he may do much good ; but is it likely that he will read them properly if he is unable to write any himself, that he will enter into the spirit of them, that he will feel and communicate the holy flame of fervent yet rational devotion ? And with respect to his maintaining a decent character out of church ; if he does so, he is so far to be honoured, but if he is destitute of clerical accomplishments, of a taste for books, and a love of learning, there is danger that from want of proper and professional employment, he will not maintain that decency of character. Having nothing to do but merely to read in the church, he will be idle, and idleness affords many temptations to violate decency of character. Is it not likely that he may commence a beau, a man of fashion, a man of pleasure, a gamester, a drunkard, or a horse-dealer ? When there is no natural turn for the profession

in which a man is placed, and no acquired talents to render him pleased with himself in the exercise of it, there is great danger of his having recourse to something either as an employment or a recreation very foreign to the decency of character which his profession requires him to support.

But, after all, is mere decency of character sufficient in the teacher of a whole parish, in the comforter of the sick, in the guide to heaven? Decency of character is supported by all his more respectable parishioners, by tradesmen, by mechanics, by servants. Something more is reasonably expected of him who supports the *persona ecclesiæ*, who was anciently called, as an appellation of respect, the PARSON, and who still has the epithet *reverend* * prefixed to his name, as appropriated to his professional character.

He should support a dignity of character as well as a decency. But no artifice, no external pomp will support it. It must support itself by real superiority. But what superiority is naturally expected as a prime requisite in a public instructor? Is it not superior knowledge of those

* Cui mens diviniior atque os
Magna sonaturum des nominis hujus honorem.

HOR.
things

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things in which he undertakes to give instruction? But can this superior knowledge be acquired without application? And is it likely that he who was selected by his parent for the church because he was A DUNCE should apply at all, or if he should, that he should apply with success?

A man who finds himself in a profession for which he is conscious of his being unqualified, feels himself uneasy. He seeks refuge in amusements unbecoming his profession; and I have no doubt but the reason why so many clergymen are seen taking delight in unclerical occupations is, that they are selected for a learned profession without any propensity to learning, and perhaps because they were supposed to be dull of apprehension.

Nothing is more common in the country than to see clergymen devoting the greatest part of their time to hounds and horses, dressing in the extremity of the jockey's or sportsman's prevailing fashion, taking the lead or acting as masters of the ceremonies at assemblies, conspicuously active at horse-races, excessively attached to cards and backgammon, and foremost in every thing which the more serious part of their congregation considers as vanity.

They

They may certainly amuse themselves with several of these things, and at the same time be very worthy men ; but yet as these things have an appearance of levity, and lead them to associate with loose and profligate characters, they give offence, and prevent them from doing that good for which alone their profession was instituted. No good can be done by a preacher totally destitute of authority ; but authority is founded on opinion, and nothing, except vice, destroys that opinion in religious affairs so effectually as the appearance of levity.

I cannot easily resist the impulse which prompts me to insert a passage descriptive of a modern curate in the performance of one of the most solemn parts of his duty, from a well-known poem, entitled *The Village*. Speaking of a sick and dying pauper, the poet adds,

But, ere his death, some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears, which bold, bad men despise.
Fain would he ask the parish-priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above ;
For this he sends the murmur'ing nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls ;
And doth not he, the pious man appear,
He, " passing rich with forty pounds a year ?"
Ah no ! a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him feeds this little flock.

A jovial

A jovial youth, who thinks the Sunday's task
 As much as God or man can fairly ask;
 The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
 To fields the morning, and to feasts the night;
 None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
 To urge the chace, to cheer them or to chide.
 Sure in his shot his game he seldom mist,
 And seldom fail'd to win his game at whist.
 Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
 Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed,
 To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
 To combat fears that even the pious feel?

Though moderate abilities and moderate attainments, with a good heart, and a decent character, may make a very valuable parish-priest, yet I can never allow that the study of divinity, as some seem to insinuate, requires only moderate abilities and attainments. It certainly affords scope for the greatest talents, and when intended to be carried to any considerable degree of perfection, it requires profound and extensive erudition.

To be a Christian philosopher, a physician of the soul, it is necessary to have studied the Holy Scriptures, in the first place, with great attention, and in the second, that wonderful microcosm, the heart of man. As anatomy is necessary to the surgeon, so is the knowledge of the passions, the temper, the propensities, and the alterations which age, prosperity and adversity,
 effect

effect in the mind, necessary to him whose office it is to reduce those who have erred, to afford rational comfort to the afflicted, and hope to the desperate. To enforce the doctrines of religion he must be an orator, he must be furnished with polite learning, with elegant diction. He must have every assistance which a liberal education can bestow, and which long and attentive reading can obtain. And shall a parent think himself justified in selecting the weakest of his children for an office so important? He who acts so unreasonably, probably renders the child unhappy, while he insults the national religion, and that God whom it was established to honour.

If the parent thinks he perceives in any of his boys a remarkable share of abilities, he resolves to bring him up to the law, and all his worldly-wise friends commend him for not throwing away so fine a boy by placing him in the church. I am fully convinced, that no department of the law requires the noble faculties of the mind in so great perfection as the pastoral office. The law chiefly requires AUDACITY AND SOPHISTRY, to both of which the church is greatly superior. The law requires the little wisdom of this world, the wisdom of those children of the world who are wiser in their generation than the children of light; but divinity towers

towers above such meanness, above lawyers and their subtleties, above every other profession; for to be a divine, properly and fully accomplished, is to be all that philosophy can give, with the addition of the purest and sublimest religion.

It would afford me much satisfaction if any thing I can say should induce the serious Christian to devote the very best of his children to the service of the God who gave them, and not impiously to consecrate to the service of the altar him whom, from want of parts, he thinks incapable of any useful service. I suspect that man to be insincere in his profession of Christianity who dares to insult it so grossly.

It is to be wished that the patronage of livings were chiefly, if not entirely, in the bishops; for private patronage, in the present age and system of principles and manners, is highly injurious to the cause of Christianity. The bishops might sometimes be misled in conferring benefices, by gratitude to their patrons; but I am sure they would for the most part dispose of the cure of souls, far better than esquires, who consider the living in their gift as a mere provision for some lubberly boy who is educated as a fox-hunter; or who, in default of a younger son, put it up to sale, and knock it down with the hammer, like lands, tenements, goods, and chattels.

Nothing

Nothing surely conduces to injure Christianity so much as a contemptible ministry; and it must of necessity be contemptible, when half the parishes in a kingdom can exhibit individuals among the laity more learned and more decent than the parochial priest, their authorised guide, whom they pay, and whom they ought to revere.

C H A P. XII.

On Etymology.

WHEN one considers the great sagacity of Plato, Varro, and Cicero, one cannot but wonder at their absurdities in the province of Etymology. The ancients, in general, must indeed be esteemed children, compared to the moderns, in the science of verbal derivation. Few of them appear to have been ambitious of that character of linguists which has been one of the first objects among modern scholars; and when they attempt to give the history or etymology of words, they often renounce that judgment which has rendered their other efforts of ingenuity invaluable. The Stoics were remarkably absurd in their etymologies.

I verily believe that their forced and unnatural derivations brought the whole science into disrepute. Such etymology as the great Cicero's, if I may be pardoned when I say it, is for the most part truly contemptible; but etymology in the hands of our own countryman Skinner becomes at once an useful and certain science. With respect to its utility, I am sure that no man can understand technical terms, or even the
common

common language of books and elegant conversation, without tracing the meaning of words to the well from which they have flowed through various soils and endless meanders; often discoloured in their channel, and obscured in their wandering; but at the same time still retaining something of the original spring, which none can accurately distinguish, who has not drawn water at the fountain.

Some of the most celebrated etymologists of antiquity entertained a doubt whether *cælum* might not be derived from *cælo*, to engrave or adorn with sculpture, because the sky in the night exhibited the appearance of a work of art, studded with gems, or beautifully engraved with figures. Varro and Cicero seem to doubt whether this is not the true derivation, though I think common sense will immediately decide, that the word is derived from *koilon*, a concavity.

Let a modern scholar, or man of common sense, judge of Cicero's etymologies in the following instances. Saturnus is so called *quia se-saturat annis*;—Mavors, *quia magna vortit*;—Minerva, *quia minuit, aut quia minatur*;—Venus, *quia venit ad omnia*;—Ceres, *a gerendo fruges*;—Neptunus, *a nando*;—though with this last Cicero seems dissatisfied, as he introduces Cotta ridicul-

culing Lucilius, for admitting it in argument. *Quoniam*, says he, *Neptunum a nando appellatum putas, nullum erit nomen, quod non possis una litera explicare, unde ductum sit, in quo quidem magis tu mihi natare visus es, quam ipse Neptunus.*

Most of the celebrated etymologists have indulged themselves in far-fetched and fanciful derivation; and this has given some occasion to the facetious to deride the whole science. The famous etymology of the word *hot* has contributed much to dishonour it; from *calidus*, said the scorner, comes *halitus*, from *halitus*, *hatus*, from *batus*, *hotus*, and from *hotus*, *hot*. A joke of this kind will frequently injure an estimable thing much more than an argument. Perhaps nothing has deterred students from learning Hebrew so much as the famous lines in *Hudibras*:

For Hebrew roots are mostly found
To flourish best in barren ground.

There is a conjectural and there is a certain etymology; the former may furnish innocent and ingenious amusement; but the latter is really necessary to accomplish not only scholars, but artists and practitioners in chemistry, physic, surgery, architecture, almost all the terms of which are Greek words, very little changed in sound, though anglicized in orthography.

And

And indeed, in the present state of our language, enriched as it is by words from the Greek and Latin, it is not easy, if one is utterly unacquainted with etymology, to hold a conversation with well educated persons, without danger of exposing ignorance, and committing absurdities. Much reading of good authors, and much converse with sensible company, will enable a man to guess at the meaning of exotic words, with wonderful success; but he will yet be insecure; he will walk on dangerous ground, if he knows not the real original meaning of the expressions which he ventures to utter. He must lose much of that pleasure which arises from the confidence of conscious rectitude, and he must often excite the derision or the silent contempt of his more enlightened associates. If he enters on the subject of science, (and who would wish to exclude it from conversation?) he will often totter and stumble. He will not only err in the meaning, but in the pronunciation, in the length or shortness of syllables, which in many cases can be determined only by the root. No accuracy of language can be expected, where etymology is unknown.

But besides its use, I think etymology, as a matter of amusement, well worthy of cultivation. If the collector of shells, fossils and

medals, and the admirer of tulips and birds, is thought to spend his time in rational amusement, why should the curious investigator of words, merely as matters of curiosity, be thought to mispend his time in a trifling and useless occupation? I am of opinion, that though the gratification of his curiosity should be his only object, he will often make discoveries, greatly conducive to the advancement of knowledge, and accuracy of language.

I was lately much entertained with looking into a very ingenious little book, written by Meric Casaubon, *de quatuor linguis*. He employs a great part of it in tracing to the Greek fountain the derivation of old English words, which come to us through the Saxon channel. Though some of his etymologies prove that the warmth of pursuit led him, like many discoverers, to see the object of it in imagination, when it existed not in reality; yet he has collected a great number of words, where the resemblance of the English and Greek is so striking and complete, as to carry with it the fullest conviction of an original consanguinity.

He quotes a list of Greek and English words from a book supposed to be written by Camden, and entitled *Paralipomena Anglica*, in which
there

there is a very remarkable similarity. I transcribe some of them in English characters for the entertainment of the English reader: *Axine*, an ax; *aster*, a star; *achos*, ach; *grastis*, grass; *elasson*, less; *era*, earth; *thera*, deer; *thrasus*, rash; *thura*, a door; *kaleo*, to call; *karabos*, a crab; *klimax*, a climbing; *kreko*, to creek; *kuriake*, a kirk or church; *kusai*, to kiss; *lapto*, to lap; *lychnos*, a link; *mene*, the moon; *mule*, a mist; *neos*, new; *holkas*, a hulk; *holos*, whole; *orchatos*, an orchard; *outhar*, an udder; *pato*, a path; *poterion*, a pot; *polos*, a foal; *rabdos*, a rod; *rakos*, a rag; *ranis*, rain; *rapizein*, to rap; *rastone*, rest; *skaphe*, a ship or skiff; *skoptein*, to scoff; *strophos*, a rope; *stronnumi*, to strow; *titthos*, a teat; *phaulos*, foul; *charme*, a skirmish.

Meric Casaubon adds a great number of instances of his own discovery, which seem to prove, that many of the Saxon words of our language were derived from the Greek, being first curtailed, and duly gothicized, to assimilate with northern words; but still retaining enough of the parent's shape and features to evince that they are lineally descended from Greek families.

I was a good deal diverted with one of his etymologies, and I shall introduce it for the en-

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tainment of my readers, without pretending to determine on its propriety :

“ *Oikogenes*, domi natus et educatus. Παιῖς
 “ ἀφ’ ὅθεν οἰκογενὴς apud Platonem, genuinus
 “ Atheniensis, Anglis A COCKNEY ; qui in urbe
 “ natus, raro aut nunquam foràs extra natalitia
 “ Pomœria pedem extulit, rerum omnium, præ-
 “ terquàm urbanarum, planè expers et ex merà
 “ insolentiâ stultus et incredulus admirator.”

Fanciful etymology, though very amusing, is held as a science in no higher esteem than judicial astrology and the interpretation of dreams, which is conducted according to every one’s whim or conjecture, without any settled rule to determine decisively.

But there is an etymology which is certain, at least as certain as human knowledge and human affairs are usually found to be ; and to this all languages must be greatly indebted for their accuracy. And indeed I am much inclined to believe the general affinity of languages, and to give more credit to conjectural etymology than the sceptical and scornful have usually allowed it. All men were certainly united in one language for a considerable time after their creation ; and after the building of Babel there was confessedly a confusion

confusion or intermixture of the various tongues on the face of the earth ; which circumstance constitutes the foundation of conjectural etymology. That confusion still remains ; and it is a very honourable and rational exercise of human ingenuity to discover the various veins and strata as they lie irregularly diffused throughout the mighty mass of universal language. Ridicule has been very improperly thrown both on the study of antiquities and etymologies. Even the truth of revealed Scripture has received additional confirmation from such etymologists as a Bryant, whose learned volumes always appeared to me to suggest some striking proofs of revelation derived solely from etymology.

C H A P. XIII.

Of a Mode of Punishment among the Romans.

S I R,

IT was a part of the ancient military discipline among the Romans, to order a delinquent to undergo phlebotomy ; and this was originally intended, as Aulus Gellius seems to think, rather as a remedy than a punishment, *quasi minus sani viderentur omnes qui delinquerent*, with an idea, that all who misbehaved were therefore to be considered and treated as invalids or unsound.

I was seriously considering this method adopted by the wise Romans, and I could not help thinking that the remedy might be extended to delinquents in modern times in other professions and employments of life as well as in the military.

Suppose the case of a knowing young man, who is not easy till he has picked a quarrel, or distinguished himself by a nocturnal riot in a college, or in Covent Garden, in the lobbies of the Theatre, or in the rural retreat of Vauxhall, or in a duel in Hyde Park. As his irregularity is usually attributed to the warmth of his blood, I should think the lancet might be used with the
greatest

greatest probability of success. A few ounces quietly let out in the surgery, might prevent the effusion of great quantities by throwing bottles, by the stroke of the watchman's staff, or the sword of some antagonist equally hot-headed.

It is usual to call persons who are too eager in their pursuits *sanguine* ; for such surely no cure can be so certain and well adapted as phlebotomy.

There is a passion which assumes the name of love, but instead of promoting the happiness of its object, regards neither its peace or good fame, while it licentiously seeks its own gratification. It has nothing in it of the tenderness, the delicacy, the purity of love, but is very violent, and seems, by the symptoms, to partake of the nature of a fever. I believe in this case copious bleeding, with a cooling regimen, would not fail of effecting at least a temporary cure.

There are numerous tribes of schemers, projectors, garreteer politicians, who pester themselves and the public with their crudities, but who might be brought to their sober senses, if the blood which flows in too great quantities to the brain were drawn off by a well-timed and powerful revulsion.

You authors, Sir, excuse my freedom, often stand in great need of phlebotomy. You have a thousand flights, fancies, and vagaries, which can be attributed to nothing but the irregular tide of your blood. You swell with pride and vanity, and think to reform the world from your garrets; but the world goes on as it pleases, and you have nothing but your labour for your pains. I think I could lower your pride and vanity by my lancet, and teach you an humility that perhaps you will never learn in the books of philosophy, and which would save you a great deal of needless trouble.

In a word, all poets, religious enthusiasts, balloonists, lottery adventurers, ambitious statesmen, and choleric orators in the British or Irish parliament, may, I am convinced, receive great benefit from the phlebotomizing system of morality. And I intend soon to offer myself to the universities as a professor of moral phlebotomy. How convenient and expeditious a process will it be! No occasion for preaching, reading, and contemplating; for whatever disorder you labour under, only repair to the artist who shaves for one penny, and bleeds for two, and you may be restored to health. Adieu. I stop short, lest you should think I want bleeding myself.

Your's, &c.

AN ETHICO CHIRURGICAL OPERATOR.

Though my correspondent has treated the subject ludicrously, yet I have little doubt but he meant to convey instruction, and I shall take occasion from his letter to recommend bodily temperance as conducive to the government of the passions and imagination.

The irregularities of youth are oftener caused by excess than by that natural ebullition of blood which is often alleged in their excuse. But allowing as much as can be required to the impulse of the blood and spirits, yet it will be still true, that extravagances of behaviour will probably be much aggravated by intemperance in wine; for indeed, to add the heat of wine to the heat of youth, what is it but to add oil to the fire? Yet at no age do men indulge in wine so freely as when, according to their own confession, their blood is already too much inflamed by its natural fermentation. If, instead of adding to the flame, young men would manage it with discretion, and even damp it sometimes, it would probably continue to burn with a temperate, yet sufficient warmth, to extreme old age. But the ardour of youth, raised to a fever by wine, not only urges to acts of folly and madness, but burns the vital stamina which were intended by nature for long duration. I by no means go so far as to recommend either phlebotomy or ca-

thartics to a young man who is under the influence of a violent passion ; but I may venture to suggest, that he would find the conquest over himself greatly facilitated by abstinence from wine, and by moderation in diet. His reason might have an opportunity of asserting that ascendancy which she ought to claim, and will probably possess, when the delirium of intemperance is once abated.

The errors of the imagination are very much encreased by intemperance. During the fever which it occasions, man is apt to dream and mistake his visions for realities. How many lives have been sacrificed to supposed affronts and injuries, to affronts never intended, and injuries never committed. But they appeared in the hour of convivial excess, not only as real, but of the greatest magnitude, and in the most ugly colours. If the offended parties would allow themselves time to cool, and spend the next day in abstinence, or at least in strict temperance, I think the phantom of imagination which appeared like a giant would dwindle to a dwarf, or dissolve into nothing, like a cloud in the azure expanse of heaven, which melts into air, and leaves an undisturbed serenity. Temperance would effect what argument would attempt in vain ; and such influence has the body over the mind,
that

that there is often no method of reducing the peccant humours of the mind so effectual as that of duly arranging the frail mansion in which it is destined to dwell. It is a most unhappy degradation, when the mind is governed by the body, over which it might, by the exertion of its native powers, exercise, for the most part, an absolute dominion.

To cure the mind through the medium of the body is by no means a new process in mental medicine. The fasts, and the mortification of self-denial, which are recommended in the church, were certainly intended to promote sanctity of life, by purifying the body, which in revelation is honoured so far as to be called the Temple of the Holy Spirit. After all our efforts, the humiliating experience of frequent failure must convince every serious man, that he must submit himself to the supreme physician, the physician of souls, who, if he will, can make us clean; and that he will do so, if we ask as we ought, with sincere faith and piety, there is every reason to hope and believe, from the consideration of that attribute in which he is known chiefly to delight.

C H A P. XIV.

Of Methodism—Causes of its Prevalence.

S I R,

I HAVE the misfortune, if I may call it such, to have obtained in my neighbourhood the appellation of a Methodist. Whether I deserve it or not, or if I do, whether there is any disgrace in it, I must leave you to judge, after having heard how the stigma came to be fixed upon me.

I live in the country, in a large parish, and my house is three miles distant from the church. The road is always bad, and in winter almost impassable; the living a very poor one, and the church consequently supplied only once a fortnight. The person who supplies it is a gentleman, who wears a striped grey coat, white waistcoat, leather breeches, belt, and jockey cap, and they say he is really a clergyman, though from his appearance I should have supposed him the squire's groom in his Sunday clothes. He reads with the utmost rapidity; and indeed I do not wonder at it; for he rides thirty miles on the day, and does duty, as he terms it, in five different churches. His sermons are but ten minutes long. He allows no psalm singing, to
save

save time, and his hunter is brought to the church porch the moment he descends from the pulpit, and so he vanishes till that day fortnight.

It may be reasonably supposed that his presence is not much revered, and that his ministry is not such as is likely to make profelytes. The truth is, scarcely any attend the church at present but the parish poor, and two or three superannuated persons who live close to the church yard. The rest of the parish, which is populous, crowd to a meeting of devout people, who assemble twice every Sunday in a little neat building near my house, erected for a place of worship by voluntary contribution.

I first resorted to this place merely to gratify my curiosity, but, like the rake of antiquity, converted by the philosopher whom he went to deride, I received some impressions, for which I hope I shall be the better during the whole of my existence. The preacher is a very sober and moral man, and so zealous and earnest in his prayers and exhortations, that it is impossible not to be affected by him. As to peculiar doctrines of divinity, I do not swerve from those in which I was educated by my parent, a serious clergyman of the Church of England; I only endeavour to imbibe the sincerity and piety of my
pastor

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pastor and fellow disciples. I do assure you that the decency and fervour of devotion which appears all around me are such as cannot fail of communicating themselves to all who are within the sphere of their influence. And then the psalm singing is truly delightful. Upon the whole, I never go to this place but my heart burns within me, and I return full of sentiments of awful reverence to God, and of good will to man. I am sure I am no enthusiast. I am sure I have adopted no tenets inconsistent with reason and Christianity. I am still a member of the Church of England ; but from the want of a fit opportunity of improving myself in Christian virtues at the parish-church, I have had recourse to a Methodist meeting, against which I know there are a thousand prejudices, but from which I also know I have been enabled to advance in faith, hope, and charity.

I own I was prepossessed in favour of the people who compose this congregation from the good which I know they did among the poor, among the very lowest and most abject of mankind, who seem to be neglected by some as if they were beneath all attention. They give a great deal of money in alms, they employ the women and children in knitting and spinning ; they have established two schools, one for girls and the other for boys, in which

which many useful things are taught, together with the principles of what they call vital religion.

I mean not to slight the Church of England; I only lament the unfortunate circumstances of many parishes, which seem to render these irregular assemblies in some degree necessary for the purposes of Christian piety. I do not like to be stigmatised as a sectary; but if to do good to all who are in distress and want, if to endeavour to live up to the pattern of Christian perfection; if this is to be a Methodist, I hope God will always give me grace to glory in the appellation, whether my fellow creatures shall affix to it the idea of good report or of evil report. Adieu.

ANTONINUS PIUS.

S I R,

I HAVE a complaint to make of an evil, which I believe is at present extensive in its influence, and likely to encrease.

I live in a country town which is rather populous. The living is a good one, and the rector resides upon it, supporting his character with great dignity both as a man and as a clergyman.

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He is an excellent scholar, and devotes much of his time to study, which gives him weight and authority in the minds of his people. He is hospitable, and visits every one; but not without that delicacy and reserve which he justly deems necessary to support his importance, an importance which he wishes to possess for no other purpose but that of doing good the more effectually.

In the church he is, as he ought to be, a most venerable and authoritative teacher. His looks are those of benevolence and wisdom. His voice firm, loud, and wonderfully expressive of devotion. His sermons are practical and plain, and delivered with authority. He is justly beloved by all, except those who are hurt by that excellence which renders their want of it the more conspicuous, or those who have been seduced from his church by arts which are not to be approved.

And this leads me to the subject of my complaint. Notwithstanding his natural endowments, his great learning and acquirements, his exemplary piety and charity, his powers of eloquence, and his indefatigable diligence in the duties of his profession, there has arisen a sect in his parish which detracts from his character, and by censuring

firming his doctrine as not sufficiently evangelical, endeavours to draw away his congregation, and is, in a few instances, successful. Several rich men of no education, and who are no judges of his exalted character, have seceded from the church to a Methodist meeting, and, by their example and their interest, have drawn many of the poorer people after them.

The preacher at the Methodist meeting is an ignorant enthusiast of the lowest order. He scruples not to rail at the church and its ministers with undisguised virulence. He has sown the seeds of dissention in a parish remarkably well united by love and good neighbourhood, and he has driven several honest labourers to a state of distraction bordering on insanity. Some of the worst characters as to honesty, sobriety, and diligence, are among the warmest of his followers; and, instead of being improved by his instruction, it is remarked, that they have been idler at least ever since they have been under this infatuation. Their families have suffered want; for they have been so much engaged in what they thought heavenly things, as to deem labour for lucre and bodily food a mean and unnecessary degradation.

The number of Methodists in our parish is at present but small. The reason is, that our pre-

sent rector is singularly well qualified to keep his congregation to his church, by his talents, virtues, and respectable character ; but he is declining in life and in health, and I am greatly afraid that under the conduct of a less able or less zealous successor, the venerable church of our forefathers will be deserted, and the barn of the merciless mechanic, who deals damnation every Sunday to the great delight of his poor infatuated hearers, crowded even till

———rumpant horrea messes.

In the mean time I will take the liberty of suggesting to the clergy of the established church peculiar exertion and vigilance, extraordinary zeal both in the church and out of it, wherever the Methodists are likely to gain ground. They succeed by dint of vehemence and ardour. They seldom have learning or eloquence in tolerable perfection, and therefore if the regular clergy display equal vehemence and ardour, they must triumph over them. I am a zealous friend to the church, and cannot see without pain the congregations stolen away by the ignorant and artful enthusiast. Adieu.

EUSEBIUS.

C H A P. XV.

Of Sensibility as it appears in Piety to God and Benevolence to Man, distinguished from that false Tenderneſs which is deſcribed in many Novels, and which gives riſe only to Gallantry and Affectation.

THERE ſeems to be a faſhion in virtue as well as in vice. There was a time when learning was the faſhion among the ladies at court, and the hours which are now ſpent by them under the hair-dreſſer, were devoted to the peruſal of Plato in the original language. Chaſtity was once the pride of all who aimed at the character of people of faſhion, and courage, honour, generoſity, gravity, and heroiſm, the ornaments ambitiouſly purſued by courtiers and fine gentlemen.

The quality chiefly affected of late is ſenſibility; and the affectation has been greatly encreaſed, if not introduced by the taſte for novels. The ſentimental comedies, and the affecting tragedies in which love and the diſtreſſes it occaſions when diſappointed, are feelingly deſcribed, have alſo contributed greatly to diſſuſe it.

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When it is genuine, and not increased to a degree of weakness and effeminacy, it is certainly amiable. True tenderness or compassion is one of the most honourable distinctions of human nature. He who cannot feel as a man when an object presents itself naturally formed to affect the human heart, displays a disposition not only odious, but such as may lead him to actual and premeditated cruelty.

But while I honour the reality, I must despise the affectation. And there is reason to suspect that much of the sensibility of which we hear and read, is affected, because it seems to operate partially and ostentatiously. It seems to display itself chiefly in gallantry, and in such acts of pity as are likely to be known, celebrated, and admired in the realms of fashion. If any lady or lady-like gentleman can find at a watering place a distress similar to any thing in some fashionable novel, it is surprising with what pathos it will be described, and with what assiduity relieved; but if a distress equally afflicting occurs in the obscure village where the mansion-house stands, no notice is taken of it, or no more than a regard to common decency requires. The reason seems to be a fear that the case is so obscure that the sensibility which alleviates it will never reach the ears

ears of those who tread the paths of fashionable folly.

And if a gross passion operating in a corrupted heart prompts to an unlawful amour, it is often obeyed by the parties with little shame, and with a great deal of complacency and self congratulation, on their being possessed of such a sensibility, which irresistibly tempts them to say,

Curse on all laws save those which love has made.

Bad passions, and bad actions the consequence of them, have always been common, and will continue to be so in the present condition of human nature; but to boast of them as doing honour to the heart, under the name of *lovely and delicate sensibility*, is peculiar to the fashionable of the present age. Mr. Sterne and Mrs. Draper have too many imitators. A goat is a personage of as great sensibility and sentiment as most of them.

If the pretenders to extraordinary sensibility really possess it in a degree which renders its fine impulses utterly irresistible, why does it not appear uniformly, and in other affairs as well as those of love? The Christian religion recommends charity and universal benevolence; but the persons who aim at the epithet fashionable as the most enviable distinction of humanity, are by
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no means equally zealous to obtain the character of good Christians. Many of them, I believe, affect the character of possessing too much sense to be seduced by any thing which they call a popular mode of superstition. When they are at their seats in country villages, and far from the tribe whose admiration they seek, do these persons of *exquisite sensibility* employ their time in seeking objects of compassion in the cottages of poverty and misery, and their money in the diffusion of comfort? Alas! they too often take the opportunity of practising a most rigid œconomy at home, to the exclusion of all bounty, that they may have abundance at the next Bath season. Charitable subscriptions are indeed very common at Bath, Bright-helmstone, and Tunbridge, and many are delighted in setting down their names, not forgetting their titles; but is there not in the mean time many a poor family pining in want near their houses and estates at home, who never receive any thing from them, because there is no subscription-book, no master of the ceremonies, and none of the fraternity of fashion to observe.

Does the sensibility to which they pretend in love display itself towards their husbands, wives, children, and in *all the tender charities of private life*? I rather doubt it, because I observe that Lady —, so celebrated for sensibility, is separated from her husband, and never sees her children;

children ; because Sir —— never gives a farthing of the fortune he acquired in the East Indies to his poor relations ; because my Lord —— is never at home, where he has a most amiable wife who pines in solitude, and in vain laments his absence. Is it necessary, to the excitement or gratification of this boasted sensibility, that the object should be unlawful or clandestine ? If so, and experience seems to prove it so, it can have no pretensions to praise ; for it is inconsistent with honour and generosity.

True sensibility, equally remote from weakness and affectation, will feel the sentiments of devotion with no less vivacity than those of love. It will, I believe, be oftener warmed with an attachment to virtue than to vice. It will be delicate and reserved, rather than forward, noisy, and ostentatious. But has the sensibility which is assumed at public places, or by the slaves of fashion, any of these characteristics ? Is it not, on the contrary, rather inclined to libertinism in religious principle, very far from scrupulous in moral conduct, bold, busy, and conceited ? It has indeed every appearance of vanity ; and, if there were not danger of confounding it with real sensibility, the honour of our nature, it ought to be universally exploded with ridicule.

That sensibility alone which produces piety to God and benevolence to man has the indisputable mark of a genuine excellence. Vice and vanity will produce the other sort, which has every sign of a counterfeit, and like the base coin which, in the hands of the interested, is taught to emulate gold, ought, if possible, to be cried down by public authority. It too often passes current in the world, not without great injury to society: for honour paid to false virtue robs the true of its just right, and contributes, by lessening the rewards of truth, to discourage its appearance.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the illiterate Fine Gentleman—military Man, &c.

THERE is a passage in Menander, frequently noticed by the moderns, which affirms, that the gods themselves cannot make a polite soldier. It has been justly observed, by those who have quoted the passage, that the ideas of the ancients must have differed from those of the moderns on the subject of politeness, or of the military order; for no profession is supposed to be so polite, in modern times, as the military.

But perhaps, in the present question, the true idea of politeness is not ascertained. If it means the graces of external behaviour only, the soldier of modern times has often a just claim to it; but if it means the polish of a cultivated mind, he will often be found greatly deficient. For though it be true, that the various company which he may see in the course of his campaigns, or in winter-quarters, may give him a knowledge of the living world, of the prevailing manners and the fashionable modes of address, yet it cannot give him a knowledge of the history and nature of man, nor such a comprehensive, liberal, and solid turn of

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thinking as can supply the want of education. As he must live much among strangers, he finds it necessary to make himself agreeable in his manners; for otherwise he would often want those comforts of hospitality, which in his wandering condition of life are particularly desirable. But if he had laid in a store of ideas by education, and subsequent reflection, his company would be more sought, and he would find a satisfaction from a due degree of rational self-esteem, to which, with a mind totally destitute of literary elegance and philosophy, he must be a stranger.

But though in consequence of long habit, strong parts, and much observation, he may acquit himself with wonderful success in the ordinary converse of the day, and be esteemed a man of sense in the conduct of business, yet he will discover his defect, his want of education, whenever he is obliged to have recourse to his pen to communicate his knowledge. He will then no longer be able to conceal inelegance and inaccuracy by external grace, nor to compensate the defect of clearness, precision, or argument, by vehemence of action or vociferation. He will often spoil good sense by bad expression, and cause contempt by blunders occasioned through ignorance of orthography. Nor let it be urged that, in his profession, he will have no occasion to write; for every gentleman must, in the ordinary affairs
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of human life, write letters; and professional men are often obliged to write more formally on professional subjects.

It may not be desirable that soldiers in general should value themselves on learning, or make it their chief ambition to excel in letters. The arts of peace, and the duties of a state of war, are so different in their nature, and require dispositions so different, that it is not easy to excel in the one without a neglect of the other; though Julius Cæsar, Raleigh, and many others, afford instances to prove that an excellence in both at the same time is possible and honourable. But in general, it is to be feared that literary ambition and employments, carried to any great length, might have a tendency to enervate the soldier, to give him a distate for the hardships which he can scarcely avoid in his profession, and to render a manly mind rather effeminate. Letters are only to be pursued collaterally with the grand professional object. They must not rival it, and much less supplant it.

A competent knowledge of letters in the soldier is all that I maintain to be necessary; such a knowledge as enables him to speak and write like a man of liberal education; such a knowledge as enables him to ~~seek~~ and find amusement in his

leisure hours, in polite literature, and improvement in moral philosophy, in the knowledge of himself, and of the various duties arising from the different relations and connections of social and civil life.

It is to the want of knowledge and taste that much of the improper behaviour of military upstarts is to be attributed. Feeling themselves deficient, and unable to support a conversation on rational subjects, or to acquit themselves with credit in serious and important business, and at the same time, from the pride of their profession, very unwilling to acknowledge inferiority, they find nothing remaining but arrogantly to claim, by noise, swaggering, blustering, and bullying, that attention, which they have no other method to secure. They cannot perhaps converse rationally, or behave decently, but if you dare to shew them that you think so, by the expression of a natural contempt, they can pull your nose, break your head with a candlestick, or run you through with the unhonoured sword which never knew an enemy but at a tavern or coffee-house. The less a man excels in intellectual, the more he is inclined to exercise his brute force; but can a profession make peculiar pretensions to politeness, with justice, which is ready to give up its claim to rationality, without which there can be no

real polish, though there may be a glossy varnish, which, in the eyes of the inexperienced, passes for the genuine lustre?

But though the military profession furnishes many instances of illiterate fine gentlemen, of those who call upon mankind to admire and applaud them for accomplishments and graces merely personal, yet it by no means monopolizes the species. And indeed, in justice to the profession, I must acknowledge, that the reason why so many illiterate persons are found in it, is not that the profession, which from much leisure in modern times furnishes peculiar opportunities for improvement, makes them so; but that it finds them so; for who are often selected for the army? They who are blockheads in their books, careless, idle, extravagant, and for that reason said to be fit for nothing else. Add to this, that young men often obtain commissions so early in life, as to be weaned from their books too soon, to have a turn of mind given them utterly incompatible with study, and that even those of the best abilities and dispositions are often sent to the regiment before they could possibly have made an advancement in learning sufficiently great to continue its effects on the subsequent periods of life.

But illiterate fine gentlemen, I repeat, are by no means confined to the army. There are some to be found in almost every department; though they are not so frequent in this country as they were before the Spectators appeared. At the close of the last century, and the commencement of the present, your very fine gentlemen considered learning as a disgrace, and with fine estates, fine clothes, fine titles, they were content with minds as unfurnished as those of their valets or their chambermaids. They could scarcely write a card or letter on the most common affairs, not even an invitation to a dinner. It was a work and a labour; and, when finished, it was scarcely legible, from the badness of the hand-writing and the incorrectness of the spelling; and by a strange perverseness, a letter of this kind was supposed to bear the marks of peculiar gentility. Beaus of those days, for of them I speak, were indeed blockheads; but, as if they were not really ignorant enough, they took pains to display their freedom from what was then contemptuously called clergy, book learning, and pedantry.

The very name of pedantry was artfully contrived by an association of confederated dunces, to convey ideas of terror; and indeed the scholars in the universities had given too much reason for confounding learning with pedantry,
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by their scholastic jargon, and their attention to a philosophy, which was of no use in society, and which, while it prevented men from acquiring the agreeable and graceful accomplishments, supplied them with nothing of solid utility to compensate awkwardness and pride.

But the case is now totally different. Men of rank and fortune bring up their children with care, and bestow upon them every improvement which their capacity will receive, and there is often found in the genteelest and most elevated circles of society, the union of the fine gentleman with the polite and well-accomplished scholar. So that the illiterate fine gentleman will not now be kept in countenance, even in the regions of high life, where he once thought himself secure from contempt, and really was so from the irrational and undistinguishing scorn of pedantry.

If a man is illiterate from misfortune, he is an object of pity, but not of contempt, while he does not give himself airs of superiority, and look round for admiration. But in the present age, the fop without education, knowledge, taste, and a power of conversing with sense and spirit, must find a society of fops equally ignorant with himself, if he would avoid derision, or if he hopes to gratify his vanity.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

C H A P. I.

Of writing to the People.—Contempt of Popularity.

IT has frequently been pretended by some writers that they do not wonder at their own want of popularity, for they never addressed the people, but were contented with the approbation of the wiser few. They judged the vulgar unworthy their attention; and they could not stoop from their own imaginary eminences to hold converse with those who are hidden in the shades of obscurity.

Writers, it is true, in profound philosophy and abstruse science can only address readers of learning, and learned readers are of necessity few, compared with the unlearned and the superficial. But works on morality and religion, subjects which equally concern every mortal, ought to be addressed and accommodated to the taste and understanding of all who possess common sense; and the more popular they are the more meritorious.

For what is the end proposed by the authors of such writings? To instruct philosophers? but
philosophers

philosophers are able to find instruction in a thousand books already before the public, the very sources perhaps from which the modern writer has derived his stream. If pretenders are not able to instruct themselves sufficiently well, yet they usually think themselves able, and the avenues to their bosoms are too often closed by self-conceit. True philosophers are confessedly few; but is it the part of a generous man to wish to confine the benefit he bestows to a few, when great numbers are eager to partake of it who are in immediate want of it? Are the writers whose works are only addressed, and indeed only intelligible to a few, so valuable and useful as those who have the desire and the skill to bring down wisdom from the cloud-topped mountain to reside on the plains below, where myriads are wandering without a guide in the labyrinths of dangerous error? And yet no writers assume an air of greater superiority than those who affirm that they write not to the people, but to the purged ear of a few speculatists, who dream away life weaving, like the solitary spider, flimsy cobwebs, which a breath can dissipate.

The writings of such men can only conduce to innocent and refined amusement; and they ought to be content with the praise of ingenuity. To extensive utility they can make no just claim;

for their utility consists only or chiefly in affording entertainment to a few. Let them possess the praise which is their due, and let them be honoured for the innocence and the subtlety of their occupations, but let them not assume a superiority over those who successfully instruct the people at large, whom they haughtily affect to despise, but who constitute the majority of mankind, who have hearts and understandings capable of happiness and improvement, and were intended by Providence to be the receivers of benefits from all those who are in any respect able to bestow them, either by superior talents or greater opulence.

Our Saviour, who knew the duties of a teacher far better than the proudest of the sophists or philosophers, professedly and particularly preached his Gospel to the poor; that is, to the many, the vulgar, the ignorant, the miserable, those whom worldly grandeur, worldly wisdom, and unsanctified science were at all times apt to neglect and despise. The truth is, the approbation of the poor was not calculated to flatter pride, and therefore it was not desired; but he who sought to do good rather than to be applauded, addressed his instructions more immediately to those who had no other means of receiving it. He addressed it in a popular way,
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not in metaphysical and scientific terms, but in pleasing parables and in familiar conversation.

And happy are those who are able to communicate good to the minds of men in humble imitation of his popular and engaging manner, who use the talents which they have received, not in seeking or supplying speculative improvement, not in gratifying their own and their fellow-students pride, but in clothing wisdom in a dress formed to attract the notice and captivate the affection of the erring multitude.

When I enter a large library, and view the bulky tomes of dull learning and abstruse science, the labours of many painful lives, now standing like useless lumber on dusty shelves, or affording a transient amusement to a few curious scholars, I cannot help lamenting that so much industry should have been exerted with so little advantage to human life. Many of them indeed were once popular, and did good in their generation; but more were never intended to be popular, and never did any good but in affording work to the ingenious artisan who printed them, or encouraging manufactures by the consumption of paper. Their authors and themselves sleep in peace; but they afford a lesson to the modern metaphysical and recondite writers not to over-
value

value their works on account of their utility, and to pay some respect to moral writings, which, though they have despised them as trifling, have yet been universally read, and have diffused virtues and principles, the happy effects of which have been doubtless great, and not easily to be circumscribed or ascertained. A hint of practical wisdom has often preserved a whole life from folly and misery, and thousands and ten thousands have been benefited as well as delighted by Addison, to every one who has read Malbranche and Locke.

To whatever superiority of understanding the metaphysical sophists may pretend, and whatever contempt they may affect for works which are universally well received by the common people, it is certain that it is not the talent of an ordinary genius to render his works acceptable to the majority of his fellow-creatures. He must have something in his spirit congenial with the better sentiments of human nature; he must have an easy and agreeable mode of conveying his sentiments, a talent by no means contemptible, a talent which those who despise it would probably rejoice to possess.

I must distinguish, while I am treating this subject, between temporary and permanent popularity.

pularity. Temporary popularity is often gained by contemptible arts, and is itself for the most part contemptible. The practice of puffing, as it is called by a ludicrous and cant appellation, often raises a bubble into the air, which bursts and is annihilated even while the people gaze ; but permanent popularity can arise only from a general experience of utility and excellence, and notwithstanding the reasonings of criticism *a priori*, and the arbitrary decisions of reputed judges, the merit of all literary works must be appreciated by their real utility, and their real utility by the extent and duration of their beneficial effect.

Heraclitus is said to have haughtily boasted, that one good judge was to him as a multitude, and that the numberless crowd was as nobody :

Εἰς ἐμοὶ ἄνθρωπος τρισμυριοι, οἱ δ' ἀναριθμοὶ
Οὐδεὶς.—

This might be said merely in contempt of some *αμουσοι*, tasteless critics, who had censured him without understanding him ; but if he meant to prefer the judgment of any individual to the united opinion of mankind at large, I must dissent from him entirely. All men have hearts and understandings in some degree of excellence ;

lence; the general decisions of whole nations must be final; and I do not believe there is so much difference between one man and another in the powers of feeling and judging as the proud imagine and assert when they mean to pay themselves the compliment of claiming a place among the *wiser* few, the select spirits, who from their fancied elevation look down on the multitude wandering in the vale below, just as they behold the reptiles of an ant-hill.

C H A P. II.

Of some Beauties in the vegetable World.

S I R,

THERE is in the human heart a *philokalia*, or love of beauty, implanted by nature. Wherever the KALON appears, whether in things animate or inanimate, natural or artificial, the heart is soothed to complacency by the contemplation of it; unless indeed some violent passion or habitual propensity, unless avarice or selfish ambition, gluttony or voluptuousness, have preoccupied its attachments, and gradually overcome every generous inclination.

I hope I shall never be so entangled by any vice as to lose my taste for the delight arising from the beauties of nature. I have a passion at present, and I confess it to be a very strong one, while at the same time I am confident, that its gratification is attended with pleasure no less innocent than great. Perhaps you will smile, when I tell you, that I have fallen in love with trees, and that my particular favourite at present is the plane-tree. I have many reasons for my attachment to that tree, while I do not deny that

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I perceive charms in many others, and am indeed, when I am in the forest, a general lover.

But in my attachment to the plane-tree I am by no means singular. Herodotus relates, that Xerxes on a march happened to find one of remarkable beauty, with which he was so captivated, that he presented it with a golden chain, to be twined, I suppose, like a sash around its body, or like a bracelet round one of its arms. Ælian adds, that he also placed at the bottom of it, in token of his passion, his own jewels, and those of his concubines and satraps, and was so smitten with it, as to forget his expedition, and to salute it with the tender names of his love, his darling, and his goddess. When cruel necessity at last compelled him to leave the object of his passion, he caused the figure of the tree to be stamped on a golden medal, which he constantly wore in memory of his love.

This fondness for a tree I consider as doing great honour to a man who might be supposed to be too much elevated with his own grandeur, and fascinated with the pomp of power, to retain a relish for the simple beauties of nature, displayed in the formation of a tree. The circumstances related of his behaving like an enamorado, I consider either as the inventions of the historians,

rians, who were by no means scrupulous in point of veracity, or as mere whimsical sports and frolics, intended for his amusement amidst the toils of war. The fact is curious, and adds something to the many honours of this distinguished tree.

Every scholar knows how greatly it was esteemed by the men of elegance and taste among the ancient Greeks and Romans. Homer mentions a sacrifice under a beautiful plane, *καλη υπο πλατανισω*. The philosophical conversations of Socrates are represented as passing under its shade, and the academic groves, so celebrated, were formed of it. The Romans delighted in it, and many of them carried their veneration so far as to water it, if I may use the expression, with wine. They thought it not enough, in beautifying their magnificent buildings, to have recourse to architecture, sculpture, and painting; but sought from the hand of nature the chief ornament of their elegant recesses, the lofty and diffusive plane-tree.

Nor have the moderns been wanting in respect to it, if it be true, as it is said, that the French once prohibited all persons from planting the tree, who were under the rank of noblemen; and

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and even exacted a fine from every plebeian who aspired to the honour of sitting in its shade.

A tree distinguished by the admiration of philosophers, poets, kings, and nobles, in the politest ages and countries of the world, cannot but be interesting to the modern observer, if it were only considered as a curiosity. The man of classical taste will view it with sentiments similar to those which he feels in the contemplation of antique vases, urns, medals, statues, the relics of ancient taste, and the monuments of oriental magnificence. But even in England, a cold northern country, where I imagine its growth is impeded by an uncongenial climate, the plane appears with a degree of beauty which seems to justify the admiration of the ancients. Its ample foliage, of a vivid and durable verdure, its pleasing outline, formed by the extremity of the branches, and its tall and stately stem, distinguish it most honourably in those modern plantations of England, where every goodly tree that will vegetate is sure to find a place. In our country, shade, to afford which this tree seems to have been formed by benignant nature, is not, during any long time, in any part of the day or year, necessary to indulgence. It is therefore less valued here than in warmer climes, where it
united,

united, in a high degree, embellishment and utility. I never could learn that it was of much use as timber, and, honoured as I wish it in the pleasure-ground and park, I hope it will not supersede the oak in the forest.

The oak itself is indeed a first-rate beauty, when it grows in rude magnificence, unembarrassed by other trees too near to admit its expansion. It is itself a noble image, and if we associate the idea of strength with grace, it is difficult not to be enamoured with the *tout ensemble*, like the eastern prince with his plane-tree.

To a man of taste in trees, there is scarcely a native of the forest which has not charms to captivate. And why should not a taste for trees be cultivated as well as for flowers, birds, shells, or any other production of nature? It is equally pleasing when once formed, and it has something in it more sublime and elevating, as an oak and cedar are grander objects than the tulip and ranunculus, or the carnation.

But, say the men of business and gravity, is it worth while to bestow any great degree of attention on any of these objects which, as matters of mere contemplation, are trifling and of little use?

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use? I answer, that as God has placed man in a theatre, with faculties to perceive beauty, and with beauty to be perceived, it would be a fullen stupidity and ingratitude, not to look and be delighted. Man, it is true, has many serious duties to perform, and many evils to suffer; and it was for this reason that so many refreshments were placed by a kind Providence within his reach. And indeed, it has always and justly been said, that few things are so conducive to piety as the contemplation of nature, as that knowledge which Solomon possessed, who knew every tree and plant, from the cedar to the hyssop on the wall.

A great part of mankind come into the world surrounded by opulence, and really have so little to do of necessity, that if they do not form a taste for science in general, and for a knowledge of nature in particular, they will be strongly tempted to do nothing, or something worse than nothing, to seek in vice a refuge from the pain of inaction. But when a man has once become an elegant spectator of the vegetable world of trees in particular, which almost every where occur, he will be able to gratify his taste without trouble, without expence, without danger of corruption, and with a probability of moral and religious improvement, arising from reflection.

The

OR LUCUBRATIONS. 119

The mere man of this world, the votary of avarice and ambition, sees more charms in Change-alley, or at a levee of a great man, than nature throughout all her works is able to display. But surely his pleasures are alloyed by anxiety and disappointment; and he might take more delight even in them, if they were diversified by a taste for the delights of nature exhibited on the mountain, or in the forest; and indeed in the garden, as it is now laid out in England, with a close imitation of the inventress of all real horticultural beauty, majestic yet simple nature. I pity the man from my heart, who cannot, like Xerxes, forget awhile pomp, power, and riches, and fall in love with a tree. Adieu.

C H A P. III.

Of the Pretensions to Learning made by vain and superficial Persons in the Company of the illiterate.

ALL kinds of deceit and affectation deserve to be detected and exposed to censure, if it were only that truth may not be overborne and discouraged by their prevalence. It is certainly injurious to society that French paste should be sold for diamonds, and the counterfeit of Birmingham pass in currency for the coin of the Mint in the Tower.

Among a variety of arts practised by many of the vain and superficial in the present age, who make it their first object to be admired by the company into which they happen to fall, is that of endeavouring to shine as men of skill in science, as well as in the art of pleasing, and of a taste for books as well as for buckles. Unfortunately, their attention to trifles in their youth has prevented them from acquiring a store of real learning, and they are therefore obliged to have recourse to hooks and baits in fishing for literary praise.

They take as much care as they can to give the conversation a literary ton, only when they
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are sure the company makes no pretensions to excellence in literature. If there be a scholar among them, they are shy of it, and introduce subjects connected with the gay world, and silyly throw contempt on learning as pedantry.

I have sometimes been diverted with hearing one of these gentlemen harangue in a semicircle of ladies and beaux on the character of the classics, talk of the beauty of the oriental languages (in which he comprehended the Greek and Roman) and admire the original Latin of Homer, and the fine Greek of Virgil, though, as I had been credibly informed, he never could proceed at the grammar-school beyond Cordery's Colloquies, with Clarke's translation, and had been removed thence to a shop, where he had served behind a counter seven years, without looking into any other book than Kent's Directory. But he had come to a fortune lately, and having been already a beau, had been led, by making out as well as he could the meaning of Chesterfield's Letters, to aspire at pleasing in all companies, and to affect the character of *all-accomplished*. From reading the pamphlets and papers of the day, he had picked up a few phrases, which he hardly understood, on most subjects, and I assure you, was considered by the party, in which he displayed his talents, not only as a very agreeable man, but

also as a very good scholar, happily uniting in himself, to the confusion of pedants, solid sense with graceful accomplishments. He is a great quoter of verses; not that his stock is very large. I believe he may have learned by heart a hundred lines in all, from various poets, on various subjects; and by well timing his quotations, he passes for a man not only of singular taste in poetry, but of a prodigious memory.

This artifice of quoting is often practised by those who, without being coxcombs like the above mentioned gentleman, in dress and the graces, wish to obtain an esteem and reputation to which they possess no just claim. I know a man who has read a little, but is by no means distinguished for his learning or genius, and who having committed about forty lines of Homer to his memory, when a schoolboy, contrives to introduce a few sounding verses in all strange company, with such address as to put himself off for a wonderful classic; whereas in truth he now never reads any thing but Hoyle and the Public Advertiser.

Quoters are indeed very numerous, and I must acknowledge that they are often very entertaining; but they must not, however, steal away the palm of learning by legerdemain, or a *deceptio visus*, which too often succeeds

ceeds with common company. It is very easy for any man, who does not employ his studious hours in a better way, to commit to memory, like a schoolboy's task, a number of beautiful passages in prose and verse, on subjects likely to occur in the course of various conversation. And though I give the quoters the praise of pleasant companions, provided they are not too prolix, yet they should not be suffered to impose on mankind so much, as to assume a superiority over real scholars, who have been treasuring up original ideas, while they have been imitating parrots or professed spouters in committing words only to memory, purposely for the sake of ostentation.

There are many who assume the office and authority of critics in all literature, who have no pretension to judgment beyond the cut of a coat, the shape of a shoe, the style of hair-dressing, a minuet, or the dress of an actor or actress on the stage. They have caught a kind of technical phraseology from periodical and newspaper criticisms, and they utter their opinions like oracles, in the little audience which has learned to look up to them as to dictators. A new book is for the most part severely handled by them, especially if it happens to take with the public, and is really a good one. It argues a wonderful perspicacity in them to be able to find out defects in works which the million are fools enough to buy and

admire. They do not indeed make a point of reading the books they condemn or praise. They are furnished with vague terms of general praise and censure, and can give laws to their subjects, like the tyrant who said, My will stands for my reason.

The using of long words derived from the Greek or Latin, commonly called hard words, has long been an artifice of those who wished for the praise of learning and knowledge, without giving themselves the trouble to acquire them. Apothecaries are often ridiculed for their use of medical terms, which they often misunderstand and misapply; but when they use them among the illiterate to raise opinion, their "*ampullæ et sesquipedalia verba*" may have a good effect; for whatever contributes to encrease confidence in the medical practitioner, contributes at the same time, to the cure of many distempers. By the way, it is desirable that apothecaries, to whom the first application is made in the greatest distresses of human nature, had a more liberal education than can fall to the lot of those who, at the age of fourteen, or earlier, are bound to a long state of mechanical servitude. .

Freethinkers, libertines, infidels, prating disputants in divinity and morality, with little learning and no principle, are very apt to add
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an authority to their conversation, by using expressions which they do not understand, and citing books which they never read, or totally misunderstood. Their affectation deserves not only ridicule, but all the severity of satire, all the insult of contempt. They produce false or mistaken authorities as genuine, which mislead hearers, who might be proof against the nonsense of their sophistry, if it were unembellished by the pomp of unintelligible words, and unsupported by the appearance of a solid and profound erudition.

With respect to the mere pretender to learning, who attempts not to corrupt or mislead his simple admirers, though his affectation is ridiculous, yet it is certainly less culpable in conversation than scandal or indecency. I can freely pardon one who, in order to appear a man of science and philosophy, reads on the temporary topic, previously to his entering into company; as I remember a gentleman who always made it his practice, on the appearance of an eclipse, a comet, or the rumour of an earthquake, to retail an article from the Dictionary on the subject for a month in all the various companies in which he fell, so as to raise a very exalted opinion of his learning, and an idea that he was as well acquainted with all parts of science as with these, though in fact he was re-

markably ignorant of every thing but the first four rules of arithmetic.

The evil of this affectation is, that it is a deceit, and no deceit should be in general tolerated in conversation, because it diminishes the confidence of society; that it often overbears the modest scholar, for ignorance is bold and vehement, and that it diffuses error by asserting things without knowledge and without examination, as truths confirmed and indisputable.

I do not condemn the principle which stimulates men to wish for the esteem which is due to science; it is often a laudable and always an innocent principle; but I wish it to operate in another manner, in exciting a degree of industry which may enable men to acquire that knowledge of which they solicitously seek the appearance. The trouble often taken to support the false glitter, might obtain a considerable portion of the solid gold; and would probably improve the mind in the research, so as to be superior to all the little arts of empty ostentation; arts which fail of their design, and cause contempt of those who might pass unobserved, or even be honourably *noticed*, if they were contented with their own plumes.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Corruption of some public Schools.

S I R,

I AM aware that the dispute concerning the preference of private schools to public, or of public to private, is as trite as the common observations on the weather. I mean not to trouble you with comparisons, but to acquaint you with my own case, and leave you to form your own opinion.

I am confident that I derived some of the greatest vices and misfortunes of my life from a fashionable school. I was placed there when I was but an infant, and lived as a FAG under a state of oppression from my school-fellows unknown to any slave in the plantations. Many hardships I suffered by day ; but I would have borne them without complaint if I had been permitted to repose at night, and enjoy those sweet slumbers which my fatigue and my age invited : but several nights in a week I was disturbed, at various hours in the night, from the mere wantonness of cruelty, thrust out of bed, and in the coldest weather stript of the cloaths. My health and my growth, I have no doubt, were injured by the

ill usage I suffered, and the constant fear in which I spent my infant days. I was beaten by the senior boys without the least reason, and often robbed of the little solace I had sought by expending my pocket allowance with the old apple-woman. It would be tedious to enumerate the various hardships I underwent before I was twelve years old. Let it be sufficient to say, that in the age of innocence I suffered in mind and body more than many adult criminals who are convicted of flagrant violations of the laws of their country. My instructors, in the mean time, were mild, and my parents affectionate; but the wanton tyranny of my school-fellows prevented me from enjoying either ease from clemency, or delight from the tenderness of parental love.

As I grew older I was emancipated from the slavery, and perhaps became a tyrant in my turn, though I believe I had learned compassion from my own misery. But I was delivered from one kind of slavery only to relapse into another; for as I mixed among great boys, it became necessary, as I thought, to adopt their manners and their vices.

One of the first bad propensities I learned was to a profusion of expence, and to the supply of my pecuniary deficiencies by running in debt wherever I could gain credit, either in purchasing my indulgences,

indulgences, or in borrowing money. I had, indeed, in common with several others of my class, some very expensive habits; for I constantly went to a pastry-cook's or the coffee-house, and very frequently to the play clandestinely. My pocket allowance was one shilling a week; a mere trifle, and by no means commensurate to my outgoings; in consequence of which I learned to take the methods practised by many others, which were to pawn at some distant house, known by the sign of the three blue balls, whatever I had possession of, either from the indulgence of relations, or as a necessary apparatus of a scholar. My watch has been in pawn a hundred times before I was fifteen. My books were sold as soon as I had moved into a higher class where they were not immediately wanted, and pawned whenever I had an opportunity of supplying their place on the day we were to read them, by borrowing others of some boy whom I could beat into compliance. A thousand other tricks were played to raise money, many of which had a tendency to destroy in the very bud all principles of real honour and common honesty. And the intemperance both in eating and drinking, which the money we received from our friends and raised by our wits enabled us to indulge in, I am convinced, laid the foundation for many chronical distempers, which at the very moment while I am writing, render my

existence painful, and will probably abbreviate it.

There prevailed an opinion, not only among the boys but among some parents, that to be mischievous and wicked was a sign of spirit and genius; and our sallies were often encouraged by smiles of approbation, though corrected by the official discipline of the masters whenever they were discovered. It was thought an honour to suffer in a good cause, and we despised the rod while we were talked of as heroes by the poor people whom we injured, by the little boys who admired us, and by *quondam* scholars, who used frequently to say that they were quite as bad, or worse than we, when they were at school. I am ashamed to relate the cruel and unjust feats which we performed and gloried in as frolics that distinguished us more than any eminence in learning or in virtue. Breaking windows, cheating poor venders of fruit, abusing the helpless with affronting language as they passed, destroying and injuring property wherever there was no danger of detection; these were some of our heroic deeds: but they were trifles in comparison with others which I could specify, and for which the poor would have been condemned to Botany Bay, or even hanged. But we were admired; and the more we distinguished ourselves

ourselves in these ways, the more likely we were thought to become one day Ministers of State, or Archbishops, or Lord Chancellors.

Just before we went to college we concluded that we were men, and rushed into vices which naturally and unavoidably produced loathsome diseases ; but even these we considered as feathers in our caps, and as manly distinctions. It may be thought extraordinary, but it is true, that few of us deemed ourselves sufficiently qualified for college till we had run deeply in debt with a surgeon.

In the midst of such cares and employments, it cannot be supposed that we paid much attention to the object of education, improvement of ourselves in valuable and polite knowledge. Indeed we were not anxious on that subject ; if we could but prove our parts and excite the admiration of young noblemen, as great geniuses, by our vicious exploits. The grand purpose was to display parts and spirit ; and we had often heard that the only way to be a Charles Fox was to be a libertine. I am sorry to say, that even our parents, many of whom had been at the school before us, did not discourage our irregularities as they ought to have done, but laughed at them with apparent complacency.

I have found since, that we were not sent to school so much to acquire learning as to make connexions; that is, to make ourselves agreeable panders, sycophants, or humble companions to some great man, who might take us by the hand, as it is called, and place us one day on the episcopal or judicial bench. Alas! the end, supposing it is likely to be accomplished, was not worth the means! the means were such as tended to destroy every purpose and every end for which a good man wishes to live. Health, learning, fame, fortune, conscience, fell an early sacrifice. I censure not the schools themselves, nor the masters, who were unable to stem the foul and rapid torrent of fashion, ignorance, impudence, and folly united.

But I condemn parents, who cannot but see these things, and yet will not co-operate with masters in the restoration of salutary discipline; who, for the mere chance of a fortunate connection, risque every thing that is rationally valuable; who talk of their childrens flagrant enormities as harmless and laughable frolicks, puerile levities, fine ebullitions of spirit which mark a sprightliness of parts, and promise future eminence. I cannot help, at the same time, despising those persons who are always talking, before
boys

boys and others, of their own foolish feats at school, and endeavouring to make it appear that they were as mischievous, wicked, and malicious, as a truly diabolical spirit could render them, at an age when every lovely quality is the natural growth of the unpolluted mind. Much of the ill conduct of boys and young men arises from the conversation of those silly triflers, and I have reason to lament that I ever heard it.

Your's, &c.

SERO SAPIENS.

C H A P. V.

Of Archbishop Secker's Literary Character—his Style, particularly of his Sermons.

THE foundation of that singular eminence and dignity to which Archbishop Secker arrived was certainly laid at the Academy of Mr. Jones of Gloucester, who had the honour to educate another most excellent divine, that shining ornament of the church and nation Bishop Butler.

It may reasonably be concluded, that the person who trained two characters so distinguished was himself respectable; and he certainly deserves the esteem of posterity, if it were only that two such lights of the church as Secker and Butler derived some of their lustre from his lamp.

The character of Mr. Jones could not, I imagine, have been perfectly known to the biographers of the Archbishop, Dr. Porteus and Dr. Stinton, whose reputed benevolence and liberality forbids one to believe that they would have spoken rather flightingly of Mr. Jones if they had known how much he was esteemed by the Archbishop,
and

and how well he appears to have deserved the most honourable mention. Their words are—
 “ The Archbishop received his education at several private schools and academies in the country. . . . In one or other of these seminaries he had the good fortune to meet and to form an acquaintance, with several persons of great abilities. *Among the rest in the academy of* ONE MR. JONES, kept first at Gloucester, then at Tewkesbury, he laid the foundation of a strict friendship with Mr. Joseph Butler, afterwards Bishop of Durham.”

They say nothing of improvements made at one Mr. Jones's Academy, but only of a connection which he had the good fortune to make there. I am convinced, from their characters, that they could not intend to undervalue Mr. Jones because he was a dissenter, and his academy was not honoured with the distinctions of the two *Almæ Matres*. But I believe they might not have seen Mr. Secker's pleasing letter concerning Mr. Jones, not many years ago presented to the public by that good Christian, Dr. Gibbon, in his Life of Dr. Watts.

Let us hear the amiable youth, for such he appears to have been, thus speaking of his preceptor, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Jones.

“ Mr.

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“ Mr. Jones,” says he, in a letter to Dr.
 Watts, “ I take to be a man of real piety, great
 “ learning, and an agreeable temper ; one who
 “ is very diligent in instructing all under his
 “ care, very well qualified to give instructions,
 “ and whose well managed familiarity will al-
 “ ways make him respected. He is very strict
 “ in keeping good orders, and will effectually
 “ preserve his pupils from negligence and immo-
 “ rality. And accordingly I believe, there are
 “ not many academies freer in general from
 “ those vices than we are. We shall
 “ have gone through our course in about four
 “ years time, which I believe nobody that once
 “ knows Mr. Jones will think too long. . . .
 “ We pass our time very agreeably betwixt
 “ study and conversation with our tutor, who
 “ is always ready to discourse freely of any thing
 “ that is useful, and allows us, either then or at
 “ lecture, all imaginable liberty of making objec-
 “ tions against his opinion, and prosecuting
 “ them as far as we can. In this and every
 “ thing else he shews himself so much a gentle-
 “ man, and manifests so great an affection and
 “ tenderness for his pupils, as cannot but com-
 “ mand respect and love.”

The future archbishop gives a short account
 of Mr. Jones and his plan, in the sequel ;
 and

and it is impossible not to think highly of the preceptor, and to lament that he should be spoken of as an obscure person, scarcely worthy of mention in the life of his scholar, afterwards the most distinguished primate of his time in Christendom.

I believe it to have been a very happy circumstance for Mr. Secker that he was educated in a dissenting academy, and under so good a tutor. I attribute much of his future eminence to this circumstance, as well as to the connexions he fortunately formed there ; that purity, that dignity, that decency of character which enabled him to fill the great offices of the church with singular weight and efficacy. There may have been deeper scholars, or greater divines, but there has seldom been a prelate of more personal authority, and in whom ecclesiastical dignity shone with brighter effulgence.

He was not without enemies, and many prejudices were formed against him ; but this is no new phenomenon in the moral world. I also once considered him as a worldly politician, who depended chiefly on external appearance, on distance or dissimulation, for the attainment of respect. I thought him an artificial character ; but, though he might not be without pride, and
might

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might assume something of a behaviour rather affected and reserved, yet, upon a review of his life and works, both literary and moral, he appears to be one of those whom posterity will consider as a truly great man. His charity and his industry were singularly great. But I refer my reader to his biographers for his general character, while I amuse myself with the contemplation of him chiefly as a man of letters.

Educated in the dissenting persuasion, and under dissenting tutors, he had paid less attention to polite letters, and more to divinity, than is usually bestowed by students in the universities. Young men in Oxford and Cambridge frequently arrive at an age for orders, and become successful candidates for them, who have studied scarcely any other divinity than such as is to be found in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and Tooke's *Pantheon*. Hebrew they usually neglect, as partaking but little of classic elegance; but Mr. Secker, at the age of eighteen, says, speaking of Mr. Jones's method, "I began to learn Hebrew
 " as soon as I came hither, and find myself able
 " now to construe and give some grammatical
 " account of about twenty verses in the easier
 " parts of the Bible, after less than an hour's preparation. We read every day two verses
 " a-piece in the Hebrew Bible, which we turn
 " into

“ into Greek, no one knowing which his verses
“ shall be, though at first it was otherwise.”

“ By the time he was three and twenty,” his
biographers relate, “ he had read over carefully
“ a great part of the Scriptures, particularly the
“ New Testament in the original, and the best
“ comments upon it, Eusebius’s Ecclesiastical
“ History, the apostolical Fathers, Whiston’s
“ Primitive Christianity, and the principal wri-
“ ters for and against ministerial and lay con-
“ formity, with many others of the most esteem-
“ ed treatises in theology.”

Few regularly bred divines, as they are term-
ed, apply themselves to divinity at so early an
age; and indeed, through the defect of a know-
ledge and of a taste for it in youth, many, after
obtaining orders, still continue to study, if they
study at all, the theology of Athens and Rome.
But the dissenters study divinity at an early age,
and if they had united the study of the belles
lettres with it, in a due proportion, I believe
their divines would have made a still more ho-
nourable appearance than they have done, though
they are, and ever have been, both numerous and
respectable.

The belles lettres enable a man to adorn his
knowledge and recommend his writings to gene-
ral

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ral notice. If Dr. Secker had united a little more polite learning to his theology, I think his writings would have been more popular. They want the graces of a beautiful style and diction.

But it will be said that he was a very popular preacher ; and how could he become so great a favourite if his language were not elegant, nor his style of eloquence adorned by the captivating graces of classical beauty ? I answer, by the solidity of his reasoning, united with the authority of his person, the gravity of his manner, and the sanctity of his character.

“ Quid isthoc erat eloquentiæ admirabilis,”
 says Dr. John Burton, “ quod a plerisque tam
 “ magnificè prædicatum accepimus ? Non sanè
 “ in sententiis δεινότης Demosthenica, non dic-
 “ tionis ardor splendorque, non ingenii exul-
 “ tantis lusus, non rhetoricorum pigmenta, et
 “ quæ aures delinire solet, periodi decurrentis
 “ clausula numerosa et canora ; verum erat in
 “ sententiis ἀκριβολογία planè Aristotelica, styli-
 “ que penitus castigata luxuries, nihil operosè
 “ elaboratum, nihil temerè effusum : pro re natâ
 “ sine fuco, sine ornatu dictionis casta simplici-
 “ tas : quicquid illud erat, verbis inerat το πῖσον,
 “ et in popularium aures animosque influebat
 “ mitis

“ mitis oratio : gestûs decori gratia, et in vultu
 “ placida severitas, singula commendavit ; imo
 “ et dictis quasi fidem imperavit ipsa dicentis
 “ autoritas. Quod erat philosophi et theologi,
 “ fatis habuit distinctè, graviter dicere ; quod
 “ vero erat rhetorum, ornatè dicere, ille non
 “ tam nescivit, quam ultrò neglexit. Quid
 “ multa ? Orator hic noster sine dicendi artificio
 “ veram eloquentiæ laudem consecutus vide-
 “ batur.”

“ Ornatè dicere,” says Dr. Burton, “ ultrò
 “ neglexit ;” but Dr. Burton, on this occasion,
 is a professed panegyrist, displaying his own elo-
 quence in the encomiastic style. If Dr. Secker
 had been a polite writer he would have sometimes
 shewn the graces of fine composition without in-
 tending it. Many of his writings are addressed to
 the learned, to whom *ornatè dicere* would not
 have been improper. Few who possess a beau-
 tiful style chuse to conceal their talent on all oc-
 casions, though before hearers of ordinary capa-
 cities and coarse taste, they may either not
 think it worth while to produce any thing ela-
 borate, or that the plainer and less adorned their
 style the more intelligible and effectual will
 be their discourse ; but Dr. Secker preached
 most of his sermons before the politest congrega-
 tion in England ; and the graces of diction
 would

would not have failed to be tasted by those who frequented St. James's church. In that region, it could not be said, when he displayed the beauties of language, that he was casting pearls before swine.

But it is candid to suppose that he was influenced by the example of St. Paul, who glories that his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth the heart. It has been said, *Cujuscunque orationem vides politam et sollicitam, scito animum in pusillis occupatum*. But perhaps this doctrine is chiefly inculcated by those who revile the excellence which they cannot reach. Why should eloquence, which serves all other causes most essentially, be prohibited from becoming the handmaid of divinity?

But if his composition is not elegant, what rendered him popular? His elocution, the grace and dignity of his person, the earnestness and gravity with which he enforced his solid doctrines.

It has not yet been considered duly whether his style is attic. I think it is not; as it appears to me rather to approach to the dry and the jejune. They who affected atticism
in

in antiquity frequently fell into the dull. The attic style may be compared to the dress of the Quakers. It is neatness without finery and without superfluity. But the dry style may rather be said to resemble the Sunday dress of a country hind. It is clean; it has no splendour indeed, but at the same time it has no grace. It has no attraction from shape or colour; perhaps it rather disgusts by its meanness and poverty. It presents not the idea of a healthy living body, but of a body dried by art for the purpose of the anatomist. It is meagre and hungry.

There is a great difference in the discourses of Dr. Secker. Some are, if it is possible, too plain, unless they were formed for the congregation of Cuddesden, a little village near Oxford, where Dr. Secker, when bishop of that see, long resided and officiated as a parish-priest. If he thus adapted his discourses to his audience, he is worthy of more praise than any excellence of style can procure. And there is reason to think he did, as his Aet sermon before the university of Oxford, and several others, are written in a very pleasing and correct style, and such as may perhaps justly deserve the name of the attic. Though, after all, the style is not the excellence on which they are chiefly to be valued.

They

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They abound in good sense, and solid observations, collected by a cautious judgment, from remarks on real life and experience. They abound in fruit; while many rhetorical declamations, much more popular in the great city, have little to recommend them but transitory and barren blossoms.

The cool, dispassionate style of Dr. Secker is the style of truth and good sense; and it is to be wished that all hearers and readers had good sense enough to give it due attention. But, in order to this, they must be all rational; they must be that already which it is the design of sermons to render them; so that for the purpose of attaching the minds of a mixed multitude, the passions and imagination must be sometimes addressed. But too great an attention to these leads to a false glare, an unsubstantial eloquence, that glitters indeed like base metal, when new, but soon loses its lustre, and possesses neither the beauty nor the value of pure gold.

I do not know whether the style of Secker's sermons is to be recommended as a model; but I am sure their good sense, their candour, their dispassionate manner, are such as must be approved by all who unite a sound judgment with the zeal of religion. There are few pieces of

didactic religion more excellent than the catechetical lectures. They are at once rational and pious, learned and familiar. His charges are given in a style of authority becoming a great prelate, and contain such admonition as, if followed, cannot fail to render the clerical function the most honourable in fact, as it is in idea, of all that supply the various wants of human nature.

C H A P. VI.

*Of the Idea the Antients entertained of Perjury—its
Punishments—Execrations.*

AN apprehension has been expressed by good and wise men that the religion of an oath is, in the present age, less and less regarded. Indeed the infidel principles which have recently been diffused with uncommon industry and art, have an immediate tendency to produce, in a reading age, this shocking corruption.

Sunt qui in Fortunæ jam casibus omnia ponunt
Et nullo credunt, mundum rectore moveri,
Naturâ volvente vices et lucis et anni,
Atque ideo intrepidè quæcunque altaria tangunt.

JUVENAL.

Those writers who call themselves philanthropists, and who, in the calm retreat of their museums, indulge their vanity by composing treatises against religion, would do well to consider a moment that they are opening a door for villains to enter and break down every salutary restraint of law and equity. If such writers really have that regard which they profess for mankind, let them

them prove it, not by disseminating ideas which introduce confusion and every evil work, but by adding force to every awful sanction, which is found by experience to encrease confidence between man and man, and to facilitate intercourse, by rendering contracts inviolable and testimony credible.

But the general subject of oaths and their violation has been amply discussed by divines and casuists, and common sense must see at once the sad effects of prevailing perjury.

I shall present the reader with a few ideas of the ancient heathens on oaths, and the punishment due to the violation of them. Those who unfortunately neglect Christianity, and the admonitions of the Christian divine, may, perhaps, pay some attention to the opinions of men who were guided merely by their reason in stigmatizing this atrocious offence.

Agamemnon in Homer swears, that he delivers up Briseis inviolate, by the Furies who punish the *perjured*, not only here, but ΤΠΟ ΓΑΙΑΝ, under the earth :

————— Ερινύες, αἱ δ' ὑπο γαίαν
 Ανδρωπους τινυυῖλαι, ὅτις καὶ ἐπιόρκον ὁμοσση.
 H 2 And

And he concludes with solemnly wishing, that if he had sworn falsely he might suffer all those many sorrows which the gods award to him who offends them by perjury.

Εἰ δὲ τι τῶν δ' ἐπιόρκων, ἐμοὶ θεὰ ἈΛΓΕΑ δαίεν
ΠΟΛΛΑ ΜΑΛ', ὅσσα δίδουσιν, ὃ τις σφ' ἀλι-
τῆλαι ὁμοσσας.

Hesiod affords reason to believe that the creed of his age respecting perjury was, that the sin of the perjured father was visited on the children as well as on himself.

Ὅς δὲ καὶ μαρτυρήσιν ἔκων ἐπιόρκων ὁμοσσας
Ψευσεται, ἐν δὲ δίκην βλάψας, ΝΗΚΕΣΤΟΝ
ΑΑΣΘΗ.

Τοῦ δὲ τ' ἀμαυροτέρῃ γενεῇ μετοπισθε λελείπται.

“Whoever willingly swears a false oath in giving his evidence, and injures justice, inflicts on himself an injury *without remedy*, and his generation after him shall fall to decay.”

In the idea of the ancients every false oath was an imprecation of vengeance on the head of him who swore; and it was common for the hearers to call down the wrath of heaven on the violator. In the covenant between Menelaus and Paris, previously to the single combat, after the slaughter

slaughter of the lambs, and the libation of the wine, the people said with one accord,

“ Most glorious and almighty Jove, and the
 “ other immortal gods, whoever first shall vio-
 “ late this oath, may their brains be shed on
 “ the ground like this wine, both theirs and
 “ their childrens; and may their wives be
 “ ravished.”

Ζευ κυδισε, μεγαυσε, κ' αθανατοι Θεοι αλλα,
 'Οπποτεροι προτεροι υπερ ορκια πημηνειαν,
 Ωδε σ' εγκεφαλος χαμαδις ρεσι ως οδε οινος,
 Αυτων, κ' τεκων· αλοχοι δ' αλλοισι μιγειεν.

Here also prevails an idea that the punishment of perjury was to be extended to posterity; an idea never entertained but when the crime was considered of a most flagitious nature.

The epithet *αρκιος* was applied to Jupiter in particular, by which it was intended to signify, that to him vengeance belonged for violated oaths. The general idea was, that the crime was of such magnitude as not to be punished sufficiently by human laws, and that Heaven itself visited the perjured with peculiar misfortunes. Hesiod represents the Furies going their circuit every fifth day of the month to haunt the bosom of the perjured wretch.

Ἐν πεμπῇ γὰρ φασὶν Ἐρινυὺς ἀμφιπολεῖν
Ὀρκου τινυυμένας. —————

In the *Bouleuterion* or Council Chamber of Olympia there was a menacing statue of Jupiter, with a thunderbolt in each hand, and an inscription on the base, denouncing woe to him who should call the god a witness to a falsehood.

In some countries the punishment by human law was death, and in others, that kind and degree of penalty, whatever it might be, which the culprit, whom the false witness endeavoured to injure, would have undergone if the perjury had been believed.

There is a well known story of Glaucus and a Milesian, related by Herodotus, which conveys an idea of the sentiments of the ancients concerning perjury. They acknowledged that present gain might be the consequence, but that future punishment, though slow, was generally sure. *Raro antecedentem scelestum, deseruit pede pœna claudo.*

Glaucus was celebrated all over Greece for honesty. A certain Milesian, under apprehensions of danger at home, and invited by the voice of fame, came and deposited a sum of
money

money with the honest Glaucus. After a considerable time, the sons of the Milesian demanded the deposit. Glaucus expressed surprise, and pretended ignorance. But as he had a regard for his character, he told them he would endeavour to recollect the circumstance; and most undoubtedly would pay whatever he should find due. He gained delay, and in the interval piously resolved on a journey to Delphi to ask the god whether he might take the liberty of making himself master of a large sum by the easy mode of perjury. The honest man wanted a dispensation, and probably thought, that if the priestess shared the gain, he should not find much difficulty. But the god returned this answer, embittered by a severe sarcasm.

“ Glaucus, it will certainly be for your advantage at present to gain your cause by a false oath, and to embezzle the money. Swear then; for death is the lot of him who swears truly, no less than of him who swears falsely. But there is a son of Orcus without a name, who, though he has neither hands nor feet, yet will quickly overtake you, and seize and destroy your house and all your race. Not so is it with the man who swears truly; for his generation shall flourish more and more.”

The affrighted Glaucus sued for pardon : But the priests answered and said, " To tempt thy God and to succeed in thy enterprize are " equally flagitious." Poor Glaucus went home and refunded the money to his Milesian creditors ; but himself and his whole family were soon after utterly extirpated. " So that," concludes the honest Herodotus, " it is the best way when " money is deposited in one's hands to think no- " thing more about it than of restoring it, when " claimed, to its right owners."

This well known and very ancient story disseminated through Greece the idea that the gods visited the sin of perjury by cutting off the perjured man and all his progeny. There was scarcely any crime among the heathens which they thought the gods punished with a vengeance so unrelenting.

" I cannot help thinking, while I am on this subject, of the solemn words in our communion service. If we take the sacrament (which is a solemn oath) unworthily, *We kindle God's wrath against us, we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death.* I wish those who are capable of perjury would apply these dreadful words to the commission of that crime.

The

The ancients certainly did believe that such would be the consequence of it.

They seem also to have had an imperfect idea of that law in which it is awfully said, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments." For their doctrine is, on one hand, that

In patrem dilata ruunt perjuria patris,
Et pœnam merito filius ore luit.

CLAUDIAN.

and on the other, that

Ἀνδρὸς δ' εὐορκῶν γένει μετοπίδεν ἀμείνων.

The idea was universal among them that the punishment, though tardy, was certain and dreadful, and that the progeny of the perjured was involved in the punishment.

Similar opinions occur in Ecclesiasticus. "A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with iniquity, and the plague shall never depart from his house. If he shall offend, his sin shall be upon him; and if he swears falsely, his house shall be full of calamities."

What was the cause of the destruction of Troy, but perjury?

The violated oath of Laomedon and its effects, though but a fable, shew the sentiments of the ancients on its dreadful criminality.

Diodorus Siculus relates that perjury was punished with death among the Ægyptians, as a crime which at once violated the piety due to the gods, and destroyed confidence among men, the strongest bond of human society. A milder sentence prevailed afterwards, according to the celebrated law of the Twelve Tables,—Let the *divine* punishment of perjury be destruction; and the *human*, *disgrace*. *Perjurii pœna divina, exitium; humana, dedecus*; accordingly with us it is punished with the pillory.

Strabo says, that the crime was capital among the Scythians, and among the Indians punished by cutting off the fingers and toes; and I believe there are countries where the tongue, as the offending member, was amputated.

From every enquiry, it appears that the heathens considered the crime of false-swearing as the most offensive to God and man. To the
gods

gods its punishment was in great part left, with a full persuasion that vengeance would be taken, though not immediately, yet severely and dreadfully. Christians surely have much greater reason to stand in awe and sin not in this particular. I omit passages from Scripture on the subject, as they are obvious, and as I intended only to produce the opinions and practices of those who could not be influenced by Christianity.

But if the crime becomes more frequent among us than it was formerly, it is incumbent on the rulers of the nation to investigate and rescind the causes, and to encourage religion and its professors by their countenance and example.

Quid leges sine moribus, vanæ proficient?

The multiplication of oaths in petty offices, in law business of small consequence, and in commercial transactions, as at the Custom-house in particular, conduces greatly to lessen the veneration due to an oath, and to encrease perjury.

On the frequency of oaths, hear the heathen philosophers. "Avoid oaths entirely, if possible," says Epictetus; "if not, as much as you can." And Simplicius adds, that swearing should be utterly declined unless on occasions of the highest moment. "Some," says Euse-

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bios, a philosopher quoted by Stobæus, “advise
“men to take care that what they swear is the
“truth; but I advise them not to swear at all,
“if they can easily avoid it.” The words of
Hierocles are remarkable:

Εν τῇ συνεχείᾳ τοῦ ὀμνυεῖν ραδίως αὖ μεταπε-
σοί τις εἰς ἐπιόρκιαν—Οὕτω γὰρ αὖ τηρησάμεν
τὸ ἀεὶ εὐόρκειν εἰ μὴ κατὰ χρῆσσιμὰ τοῖς ὀρκοῖς.

“In the frequency of oaths any man may
“easily fall into perjury. We may preserve
“ourselves free from perjury, if we do not use
“oaths frequently and unnecessarily.”

What would these sensible and pious ancients
have said if they had heard the oaths administer-
ed at public offices, in courts of justice, and
other places, on trifling occasions, by clerks,
attornies, and cryers, who read the most awful
forms just as if they were running over a lease,
or galloping through *lands, messuages, tenements,*
and hereditaments. But this haste and indecency is
unavoidable, say they, because it is necessary for the
dispatch of business.—Of business, Sir, says the
clerk in office, or the attorney, knitting his
brow, and looking with all the air of self im-
portance—And what business? Is it such as
will justify endangering the peace of mind, and the

the everlasting happiness of ourselves and our fellow creatures? O, Sir, no preaching, says the clerk or attorney, for the justices or commissioners are just come—here, take the book five or six of ye, and swear away—there, there—very well—kiss the book—you kiss your thumb—kiss the book, I say—there—*So help you God.*—Call the rest—come, make haste—here is room for more thumbs upon the book.—We cannot stay here all day—swear away, I say—*So help you God—TACTIS SACROSANCTIS CHRISTI EVANGELIIS!*

How must the awe which the common people entertain for God and magistracy be diminished, by proceedings thus hasty and irreverent, in the midst of noise, riot and confusion! Government must lay in more timber for pillories, if oaths are thus administered, and if infidelity is encouraged by the example of the Great.

Let modern experience determine whether the opinion of the ancient is not true, when he says,

Φυεται εκ πολυορκιας ψευδορκια. PHILO.

“ False swearing is the natural consequence
“ of much swearing.”

C H A P. VII.

Of Sacred Poetry—its Introduction into Schools, &c.

S I R,

THERE is, I think, a prejudice against sacred poetry which cannot be justified. To praise God with the voice of pious gratitude, and to celebrate him with that genius which he gave, is the noblest employment of the mind of man. I wish indeed that more men of genius had undertaken this office. But men of genius have been seduced by the world. They wished very naturally for praise; and they thought *sacred poetry* not likely to confer it in the same degree as profane. If Shakspeare, Dryden, and Pope had directed their powers to it, great would have been the effect! If they had struck the Davidean lyre, what multitudes would have joined in the song, and have been led by melody to the altar, and from the altar of the church to the choir of heaven.

It has been concluded from the rarity of excellence in sacred poetry, that it is scarcely attainable; that there is some insurmountable obstacle to perfection in its very nature; that sacred
subjects

subjects are already so exalted that poetry cannot raise them any higher. It is true, that moderate poetry cannot raise them; but what think you of Milton's muse? Cowley very justly says, "none but a good artist will know how to do it : neither must we think to cut and polish diamonds with so little pains and skill as we do marble : for if any man design to compose a sacred poem, by only turning a story of the Scripture, like Mr. Quarles, or some other godly matter, like *Mr. Haywood of Angels*, into rhyme, *he is so far from elevating of poesie, that he only abases divinity*. He who can write a profane poem well, may write a divine one better ; but he who can do that but ill, will do this much worse."

Divinity has been too often debased in England by bad poetry : but even that bad poetry has had a good effect on corresponding readers. It has pleased and informed those who were bad critics though good men. Youth and ignorance have been induced by rhimes and metre to learn by heart valuable instruction. Minds that could not rise to the elevation of Milton have been nourished by the humble poetry of the good Watts. That saint (for he has a better title to the name than many in the Calendar) often sung sweetly ; but there was something wanting to make his songs generally acceptable to the
lovers

lovers of classical poetry. "His devotional poetry," says Johnson, "is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of its topics enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction."

Johnson's judgment of Watts as a poet appears to be just. But if he means to affirm of sacred poetry that its topics are few, and that it rejects the ornaments of figurative diction, I think his opinion liable to controversy. There is no subject of morality, copious as it is, which will not admit of being spiritualised. Heaven, hell, earth, and sea, abound with topics for sacred poetry. But the critic says, "the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction," an opinion formed with less deliberation than most of the decisions of this judicious writer; for is not the model of all sacred poetry, that of the Bible, more figurative than any other? Figures are no where more abundant, nor more lively, than in Isaiah, the Psalms, and the Song of Solomon. If the ornaments of figurative diction are not frequent in Watts, there is reason to believe the poet voluntarily sunk himself in the Christian. In the preface to his imitation of the Psalms he says, "I am sensible I have often subdued my style below the
 "esteem

"esteem of the critics, because I would neither
 "indulge any bold metaphors, nor admit of hard
 "words, nor tempt an ignorant worshipper to
 "sing without understanding." In his preface
 to his Hymns, he says, "The metaphors are ge-
 "nerally sunk to the level of vulgar capacities.
 " Some of the beauties of poesy are ne-
 "glected, and some wilfully defaced. I
 "have given an alloy to my verse, lest a more
 "exalted turn of thought or language should
 "disturb the devotion."

An estimate, therefore, of what may be done
 in sacred poetry must not be formed from what
 has been done by Watts; for he professedly
 lowered his genius, and wrote below his own
 standard, for the sake of accommodating his
 readers in humble life, who were not judges of
 poetry, but who, in the offices of devotion, stood
 most in need of assistance. That singular virtue
 can never be sufficiently esteemed, which mortifi-
 cated the pride of human nature, by sacrificing the
 love of praise to the desire of doing good among
 those whose esteem is too often little valued, the
 poor and the uninstructed.

But there are many in whom exalted poetry
 and refined taste are happily combined. For these
 a higher style of devotional poetry is justly re-
 quired;

quired ; and therefore I cannot help wishing that some of the greatest poets had exerted themselves in sacred poetry, and produced works of prime merit and value, and fit to be placed among the first classics of our country.

It cannot be said that nothing is extant of this kind. Milton's works are very much in the style of sacred poetry. Cowley's *Davideis* is not esteemed a fortunate attempt. Pope's *Universal Prayer* and *Messiah* shew what he could have done if he had chosen to bend the force of his genius to it. Addison had a turn for it, and succeeded well in his imitation of the *Psalms*. Young has deserved the reputation he has gained on sacred subjects by his sublimity and originality.

Authors of inferior genius have abounded in the walk of sacred poetry. Mrs. Rowe has delighted many readers. Merrick's genius was formed for sacred verse. But a multitude of poems and divine songs have had nothing in them divine but the epithet in the title-page. The great numbers of rhymers pretending to sacred poetry evinces that there is a great love of the subject. It is a fertile field, from which, when the sun of true genius shall shine upon it, a fine crop of fruits, and a beautiful display of flowers, may reasonably be expected.

Mr.

Mr. Seaton's prizes at Cambridge were laudably intended to turn the attention to sacred poetry. But I know not how it is, though prizes excite a great deal of useful and elegant mediocrity, they have seldom called forth the display of first rate genius. They have raised meteors, but not created suns. The Seatonian poems have however to boast a Smart and a Porteus, and many others, who, if not equally known to fame, have singular merit. Free-born genius seems to stand too much in awe of those who are to examine her pretensions and decree the prize. In that servile state the noble freedom of genius seems lost in a timidity which debilitates the mind. Yet I do not know a collection of poems on divine subjects more laudable than those of the Seatonian poets, Bally, Glynn, Scot, Hey, Jenner, and other successful candidates for the prize. The classical reader, of a serious and religious turn, will rejoice to find the happy union of classical elegance with pious sentiments. I wish this institution was more encouraged by public notice, that the poet's emulation might be excited, and a taste for poems which tend to inspire piety in a most agreeable manner, rendered more prevalent.

If men of the first rate genius had dedicated their talents to the sublimest subject, the Great
God

God of heaven and earth, by hymns of gratitude, by celebrating his works, and recommending every moral and religious duty of obedience to his will, with all the charms of numbers, and in all the colours of a fine imagination, they would have converted many to Christianity, and inspired those with the love of virtue who are now often seduced by the licentious muse to vice and scepticism. Let men of genius enter this field, and, lest they should think the province does not belong to them, let them recollect that the example of composing hymns was set by their great predecessors Homer and Callimachus; and that Milton derived from sacred subjects a style of poetry which all the enlightened world admire.

C H A P. VIII.

Of some Writers of Sacred Poetry in Latin—Prudentius, and others—Of their Introduction into Schools.

IT has been much the fashion among sceptical writers to extol Julian the apostate. They are desirous of attributing to him every excellence, and particularly the liberality of an enlightened philosopher. I leave it to the reader to judge how liberal he was, when he prohibited all Christians the study and attainment of Grecian literature. He meanly hoped, by keeping them in ignorance, to be able to effect that ruin which all his power, and all the wisdom and insolence of his adherents, was unable to accomplish. He could not trust to a fair engagement in the controversial war; but interposed his imperial authority to take the arms out of the hands of his opponents, in order to oppress them with ineffectual resistance.

It was during this disgraceful prohibition of the Greek authors that Apollinaris, to supply the Christians with classics of their own, wrote the history and antiquities of the Hebrews to the reign of Saul, in twenty-four books, and in a
professed

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professed imitation of Homer. Aspiring to supply the want of the classics in all respects, he also imitated Menander in comedy, Euripides in tragedy, and Pindar in lyric poetry.

It was a pious and a spirited design; but I cannot help considering it as rather ridiculous, that a man should think it so easy a thing to supply, on an emergency, the loss of the finest writers in the world, by the substitution of his own hasty effusions. There is something mechanical in the idea. An artisan of the press might properly say, on hearing that books were destroyed or prohibited, Regard it not, we can easily make others; but to sit down with as much coolness as you sit down to write a letter, to write such books as might supply the want of Homer, Menander, Euripides, and Pindar, argues either a too high an opinion of one's own, or too low a one of their excellence.

The man undoubtedly meant well, and his works would have been valuable as curiosities if they had all descended to posterity. Sozomen, who probably speaks with the warmth of zeal, affirms that the imitations of Apollinaris equalled the originals.

As his Hebrew antiquities were intended for schools, whence the classics were at that time tyrannically

tyrannically excluded, they might be truly useful. They might contribute greatly to diffuse a knowledge of Jewish history among the early Christians and converts from heathenism.

Many modern writers have, like Apollinaris, expressed a wish that the Christian classics were introduced into classical schools; but I fear their zeal has exceeded their judgment.

The pious Monro, in his burning zeal to promote Christian education, says, "what can be more
 " surprising than to find the Christian books so
 " far discarded, that very few, if any of them,
 " are to be found in our grammar schools? . . .
 " One need not scruple to say that Nonnus's
 " metrical paraphrase of the Gospel of St. John
 " is infinitely more fit to be put into the hands
 " of Christian youth than *Homer's Iliads*; and
 " Macarius's Homilies than any part of the
 " writings of the blasphemous Lucian? And
 " certainly the very elegant and polite Orations
 " of Muretus may be useful to the Christian
 " youth on several accounts. And why should
 " not the excellent poems of Prudentius, Na-
 " zianzen, Palingenius, Sedulius, and Textor,
 " together with a great many more, both an-
 " cient and modern, Christian poets, particu-
 " larly the several elegant Latin versions of the
 " Psalms

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“ Psalms of David, as also the noble Greek pa-
 “ raphrase of the same divine book done in he-
 “ roic verse by the celebrated Apollinaris,
 “ Bishop of Laodicea, and designed originally
 “ for the benefit of the Christian youth ; why
 “ should not, I say, the poems of such eminent
 “ and learned Christians, at least in Christian
 “ schools, be preferred before those of Ovid,
 “ Horace, or Martial, before Hesiod or Theo-
 “ critus, or any other of the Pagan writers ?”

With a spirit of fervent piety the author pro-
 ceeds to recommend the use of Christian poets
 in Christian schools. His persuasion will, how-
 ever, be ineffectual ; and indeed it must be own-
 ed, that what he says militates against a classical
 education in general ; for whatever may be urged
 by such zealots, Homer, Virgil, Horace, and the
 other fine writers of the better ages, will never
 find equivalent substitutes in Apollinaris, Pru-
 dentius, Palingenius, Nazianzen, Sedulius, and
 Textor. The boy will not acquire classical taste
 from those who possess not classical beauty ; and
 as to piety, he might probably learn the elements
 of it at least *as well* in prose and in his verna-
 cular language.

The classics, in my opinion, should be cleared
 for the use of schools of all corrupting ideas and
 passages ;

passages; and then they will not only not be hurtful, but highly improving both to morals and taste: for the morality in which they abound has the great advantage of being impressed on the mind with all the force of eloquence, and the captivating graces of polished language. Many of the Christian poets, whom the zeal of well-meaning persons would substitute in the place of the classics, have little more poetry or elegance than the Christmas verses of the bellman.

Prudentius is esteemed the best among the Christian classics; and though I cannot think, with Sidonius Apollinaris, that he is to be compared to Horace, yet I have observed many passages which have such a degree of excellence as entitles them to the epithet PRETTY. Prudentius was called by the old literati *Amænus*, as if it were his proper name.

The following passage from the *Hymnus Epiphaniæ* has been much and justly admired. The subject is, a congratulation of the innocents massacred by Herod. It is quoted in Dr. Edward Sparke's *Scintilla Altaris*, or Primitive Devotion, and afterwards by Dr. Horne in his Sermon on Innocents day.

Salvete, flores Martyrum,
Quos lucis ipso in limine,

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Christi infecutor sustulit,
Ceus turbo nascentes rosas.

Vos, primæ, Christi victimæ,
Grex immolatorum tener,
Aram ante ipsam, simplices,
Palmâ et coronis luditis.

This favourite passage is thus introduced :

Audit tyrannus anxius
Adeffe regum principem,
Qui nomen Israël regat,
Teneatque David Regiam.

Exclamat amens nuncio,
“ Successor instat—pellimur—

“ Satelles, i, ferrum rape,

“ Perfunde canas sanguine.

“ Mas omnis infans occidat

“ Scrutare nutricum sinus

“ Interque *materna ubera*

“ Ensem cruentet *pugio*.

“ Suspecta per Bethlem mihi

“ Puerperarum est omnium

“ Fraus, nequa furtim subtrahat

“ Prolem virilis indolis.”

Transfigit ergo carnifex

Mucrone districto furens

Effusa nuper corpora

Animasque rimatur novas.

Locum minutis artibus

Vix interemptor invenit,

Quo plaga descendat patens

Juguloque major pugio est.

O barbarum spectaculum !

Incisa cervix cautibus

Spargit

Spargit cerebrum lacteum
Oculosque per vulnus vomit.
 Aut in profundum palpitans
 Mersatur infans gurgitem
 Cui subter arctis faucibus
 Singultat unda et halitus.
 Salvete, &c.

The classical reader will immediately perceive a deficiency of that fine spirit and that solid judgment which dignify the poets of a better age. It would be easy to select many pretty passages, but they are usually surrounded with so much flatness and prosaic metre, as to be almost lost, like the dust of gold in the sands of a river.

Pious readers may find a good deal of amusement in the perusal of Prudentius; but then they must not read him as a classic of the first rank, to which elevation zealous devotees wish to raise him, and, in the very attempt to exalt, debase him.

The most esteemed poem, according to Cre-
 nius, is the tenth hymn of the Cathemeron, *in*
exequiis defunctorum. The eleventh of the same
 book, *octavo calendas Januarias*, is extolled in
 high terms by Buckner, who calls it, *egregium ac*
plane divinum; cui neque ad dictionis elegantiam
nec concinnitatem numerorum, tum inventionis acu-
men atque ingenium quidquam deest.

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The tenth hymn concludes thus :

Patet ecce fidelibus ampli
Via lucida jam Paradisi;
Licet et nemo illud adire,
Homini quod ademerat anguis.
Illic precor, optime ductor,
Famulam tibi præcipe mentem
Genitali in sede sacrari,
Quam liquerat exul et errans.
Nos tecta fovebimus ossa
Violis et fronde frequenti,
Titulumque et frigida Saxa
Liquido spargemus odore.

The following passages are from the eleventh,
on the Nativity :

Jam mella de scopulis fluunt
Jam stillat ilex arido
Sudans amomum in stipite
Jam sunt myricis balsama.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
Peccator, intueberis
Celsum coruscis nubibus.
Cum vasta signum buccina
Terris cremandis miserit
Et scissus axis cardinem
Mundi ruentis solvent, &c.

But I have cited enough to give a taste of
Prudentius, and as his books are common, to them
I refer the reader.

Aurelius

Aurelius Prudentius Clemens was born in Spain about the year 348, and flourished in the reign of Theodosius the Great.

He first studied the law and pleaded at the bar, and was afterwards promoted in the army and in civil rank, which is chiefly collected from his own verses.

Frænos nobilium reximus urbium
Jus civile bonis reddidimus, reos
Tandem terruimus, militiæ gradu
Evectum pietas principis extulit.

There is but little known of his private life ; but it is generally believed that, after a life of civil honours, he died in old age.

In poetical excellence he rose greatly above the Christian poets of his time, though, after all, he cannot be said to have often surpassed the line of mediocrity. It is a great defect in him, as he does not compensate it by sublimity, that he scruples not to violate the common rules of prosody. A false quantity appears to him a venial poetic licence. Among many others I select only the instance of Εἰδωλον, *Idolon*, the penultima of which he makes a short syllable.

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He is not without his zealous encomiaſt. Barthius calls him a treasury of elegance, and a poet not to be paſſed over like one of a vulgar and common genius. He honours him with the name of the *Divine* Pindar.

In the *Scaligerana* he is called not only a good but a very elegant poet; but general praiſe is little to be depended on.

Like a Chriſtian, he ſpeaks humbly of himſelf on all occaſions, though not in the ſtyle of Horace's

Sublimi feriam ^{caſu} ~~carmine~~ ſydera, vertice.

Carminis leges amor aureorum
Nominum parvi facit, et loquendi
Cura de ſanctis vitioſa non eſt,
Nec rudis unquam.

He comforts himſelf with ſaying—

Adprobat tamen Deus
PEDESTRE CARMEN et benignus audit,
Attamen vel infimam
Deo obſequelam præſtitiffe prodeſt
Quicquid illud accidet,
Juvabit ore perſonâſſe Chriſtum.

It is common among pious writers to declare, that they voluntarily renounce the elegances, the
graces,

graces, the beauties of style and composition as beneath their dignity. It is certainly an ill judged renunciation; for why should not sacred subjects have a dress corresponding to their dignity, and why should profane and licentious compositions have advantages over them which will never fail to draw the attention of mankind, and frequently cause a majority of votes in their favour?

C H A P. IX.

The same Subject continued—Vida—Arthur Johnston—Buchanan.

LATER poets have approached much nearer to Augustan elegance and purity than those early Christians who wrote about the age of Prudentius, and who seem to have neither admired nor studied the best models of poetic diction. Their first object was the expression of piety. So far they were indeed right ; but as they thought it proper to express their piety in verse, it was surely worth while to render that verse agreeable to the reader, by the graces of a fine style. I am sure the cause of piety would have been greatly promoted by an union with elegance. They disgraced piety as far as they were able, by cloathing her in a mean dress ; and those who admired their sentiment could not but despise their diction.

Not so Marcus Hieronymus Vida. He drank at the Virgilian fountain ; and borrowed the beauties of Pagan poetry to decorate the sentiments of Christian devotion.

Sat ludo scenæque datum.———

Carmina nunc mutanda ; novo nunc ore canendum

Jamque

Jamque alias Sylvas, alios accedere fontes
Edico : jam nunc, polluto calle relicto,
Hâc iter esto. —————

Quo rapior ? quo vota trahunt ? quæ tanta cupido ?
Sevocat abductam mortali a corpore mentem
Ignotasque vias latè jubet ire patentis
Ætheris et liquido mihi sedem figere cœlo ?
Terra, vale ; curæque humiles hominesque, valete. . .
Tollor humo, totusque levem propè vertor in auram,
Aeriasque plagas superare et linquere nubes
Sub pedibus, rapidoque viam conjungere soli,
Dulce mihi, summoque in vertice sistere mundi.

He goes on in a manner similar to this in a hymn to *God the Father*, of near one thousand lines, in which, lamenting his inability to do justice to his subject, he says,

Sint ideo potius tibi nostra silentia laudi
O Deus, O jubar æternum ! inviolabile lumen.

Which appears to me to have been imitated in Thomson's Hymn.

—————But I lose
Myself in Him, in light ineffable.
Come then, expressive Silence, muse his praise.

A similar fire from the altar glows with fervent heat through the hymns to the Son and Holy Ghost. If there is any fault, it is one which does honour to his invention, a too great

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exuberance, or even prolixity. There are many most animated passages in the hymn to the Holy Ghost; a fine subject for the sublimest genius.

An Deus in nobis? —————

————— Deus infidet ipse

Intus agit Deus, et nostro se pectore versat. . . .

Fallor? an ille ruit calor? ecce mihi artubus ardor

Ingruit; ante oculos lux en! mihi plurima oberrat.

—Sancte, veni; penitus te mentibus inferere nostris

Aura potens, amor omnipotens, cœli aurea flamma.

The whole volume of *Hymni de rebus Divinis*, breathes the spirit of divine love, and exhibits a great share of Virgilian grace. These qualities are the great *desiderata* in sacred poetry.

In his hymn on the Eucharist, speaking of the bread and wine, he very injudiciously calls one Ceres, and the other the draughts of Bacchus.

—————nec crede sapor

Dum gustu exploras *Cerere* laticesque *Lyæos*.

But no wonder at any absurdities, when he was describing the transubstantiation.

Allowance must be made in reading Vida for many Popish errors, and some absurdities which arose from his desire of describing the doctrines of Christianity in the language of heathen mythology.

thology. Oil and vinegar would coalesce as soon as the polytheistical fictions of Greece and Rome with the pure religion of Jesus Christ.

I am aware that Julius Scaliger says of the hymns and eclogues, *Puerilia sunt et plebeia. Catulli venerem dum vult assequi, delicias lenociniis plebeias fecit. De Poet. lib. 6.* But Julius Scaliger is a literary tyrant, and of his arbitrary dictation it may be said, *stat pro ratione voluntas.*

As I have given a specimen of Prudentius on the subject of the Innocents, I will cite another from Vida on the same subject. Prudentius for once, perhaps, has the advantage.

Beatæ animulæ, parvuli integelluli,
Quos hausit immanissimi regis furor
Ab ubere abreptos, parentium ab sinu,
Dum perdere simul autumat, regno cavens,
Incognitum sibi aureum puellulum,
Quem nuntiabat fiderum præsentia
Regem universis nuper ortum gentibus.
Vos vere veluti gemmulæ quas primulo
Adussit albicans pruina primulas,
Ætatulæ ipso concidistis fosculo.
Pro illo ante vobis contigit pulchrè mori
Qui pro omnium vitâ immolandus venerat,
Beatæ animulæ, fosculi cœlestium.

Vida's *Christiad*, though founded on a most sublime subject, is generally thought not to have

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advanced beyond the line of mediocrity. There is in it a deficiency of fire. But the poet was evidently awed by the grandeur of his enterprize, and his genius sunk under his apprehensions of failure. I cite the following specimen on the Resurrection, a theme which might inspire the dullest of bards.

Ibunt aligeri juvenes, cœlumque profundum
 Horrifico sonitu implebunt, atque ære recurvo
 Quatuor a ventis excibunt undique gentes :
 Judicis ad solium properabitur æthere toto
 Ipse alte effultus, montisque in vertice summo
 Arbiter effulgens circumferet ora tremenda
 Secernetque pios, dextraque in parte locabit.

There is in this, and throughout the whole poem, an even tenor of elegant versification ; but there is too little of the *Mens divinior*, and the *ignea vis*.

Perhaps the critics have expected too much in this poem, and, as it commonly happens, have, in consequence of a disappointment of unreasonable hope, revenged themselves by a contempt equally unreasonable.

Vida is less known and read in Great Britain than the two Latin translators of the Psalms, George Buchanan and Arthur Jonston.

I consider

I consider Buchanan as one of the most illustrious ornaments of Scottish literature. He was born in 1506, and died in 1582. His works consist of a Dialogue *de jure regni apud Scotos*; the Grammatical Rudiments of Linacre, translated from English into Latin; the History of Scottish affairs; a poetical paraphrase of David's Psalms; and Miscellany Poems.

Joseph Scaliger, in a complimentary copy of verses to Buchanan, says,

Namque ad supremum perducta poetica culmen
In te stat, nec quo progrediatur, habet.
Imperii fuerat Romani Scotia finis;
Romani eloquii Scotia finis erit.

He is extolled in the highest terms as an historian; but at present I am to consider him as the poetical paraphrast of the Psalms.

The ninth and tenth verses of the eighteenth Psalm are universally admired, even in the production of Thomas Sternhold.

The Lord descended from above,
And bowed the heavens high,
And underneath his feet he cast
The darkness of the sky.
On Cherubs and on Cherubim
Full royally he rode,
And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying all abroad.

Merrick

Merrick has given them thus :

Incumbent on the bending sky,
The Lord descended from on high,
And bade the darkness of the Pole
Beneath his feet tremendous roll.

The cherub to his car he join'd,
And on the wings of mightiest wind,
As down to earth his journey lay,
Resistance urged his rapid way.

Let us hear Buchanan.

Utque suum Dominum terræ demittat in orbem
Leniter inclinat iussum fastigia cælum :
Succedunt pedibus fuscæ caliginis umbræ
Ille vehens curru volucris, cui flammeus ales,
Lora tenens levibus ventorum adremigat alis,
Se circum furvo nebularum involvit amictu
Prætenditque cavis piceas in nubibus undas.

This is well paraphrased ; except perhaps that there is an unpardonable *cacophony* in terminating two succeeding lines with words so similar in sound as *ales* and *alis*. But this I confess is not the most favourable specimen of Buchanan ; and I by no means think it equals the admired sublimity of Sternhold.

It may not be disagreeable to present the same passage to the reader in the words of Arthur Jonston.

Æthere

Æthere depresso, solis descendit ab alto
 Nubila fidereos implicuêre pedes.
 Ventorum volucres humeris circumdedit alas
 Scandit et ætherei flammea terga chori.

The twenty-third Psalm is one of the most popular.

The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
 And feed me with a shepherd's care, &c.

Buchanan translates it thus :

Sicut pastor ovem me Dominus regit :
 Nil deerit penitus mihi
 Per campi viridis mitia pabula
 Quæ veris teneri pingit amænitas
 Nunc pascor placidè, nunc saturum latus
 Fessus molliter explico.
 Puræ rivus aquæ lenitèr adstrepens
 Membris restituit robora languidis
 Et blando recreat fomite spiritus
 Solis sub face torridâ.

I subjoin the version of Jonston.

Blandus ut upilio, me pascit conditor orbis,
 Ne mihi quid desit, providus ille cavet
 Dat satur ut recubem pratorum in gramine molli ;
 Ducit et ad rivos lenè sonantis aquæ.

I am sorry Jonston versified all the Psalms in the elegiac measure, however different their subject or style. His verses are pretty and correct ;

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rect ; but he does not appear to reach the sublimer strains of David's lyre. But, lest I weary my reader with Latin citations, I will conclude with a short extract from a poetical paraphrase of the twenty-third Psalm by Dr. Jortin.

Me tuos inter numerare, pastor
Summe, dignaris, quibus ipse virgâ
Aureâ ductor referas beati

Ruris honores.

Pascimur campis, ubi lene ridet
Florido natura decora cultu
Fonsque vitales saliente rivo
Sufficit auras.

C H A P. X.

Miscellaneous Literature—The Pædotrophia of Scævola Sammarthanus.

PHYSICIANS have often written didactic poems on various subjects connected with the business of their faculty. Armstrong's poem on health is one of the best I have seen; but the *Syphilis* of Fracastorius, and the *Pædotrophia* of Sammarthanus, are not without distinguished beauty.

Though Sammarthanus's *Pædotrophia*, or *Art of Nursing*, is in Latin; yet the poet descends to such minute precepts as really concern the nurses and gossips, who, unless they are as expert in the Latin as in the vulgar tongue, will not be the better for them.

The following passage, in which the poet recommends to mothers the suckling of their infants, is exquisitely beautiful:

Ipsæ etiam Alpinis villosæ in cautibus ursæ,
Ipsæ etiam tigres, et quicquid ubique ferarum est
Debita servandis concedunt ubera natis;
Tu, quam miti animo natura benigna creavit,

Exuperes

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*Exuperes feritate feras? nec te tua tangant
 Pignora, nec querulos puerili e gutture planctus
 Nec lacrymas misereris, opemque injusta recuses,
 Quam præstare tuum est, et quæ te pendet ab unâ?
 Cujus onus teneris hærebit dulce lacertis
 Infelix puer, et molli se pectore sternet?
 Dulcia quis primi captabit gaudia risus,
 Et primas voces, et blæsæ murmura linguæ?
 Tunè fruenda alii potes ista relinquere, demens,
 Tantique esse putas teretis servare papillæ,
 Integrum decus, et juvenilem in pectore florem?
 Tu, cui concedunt meliorem numina mentem,
 Sume ultro quodcunque operæ, quodcunque laboris,
 Ut serves opus ipsa tuum et pia munera præstes.*

“ The very bears on the Alpine rocks, the
 “ very tigers themselves, and the fiercest wild
 “ beasts on the face of the earth, give suck to
 “ their young ones. Will you, whom nature
 “ has kindly formed with tender sympathy, ex-
 “ ceed the brutes in cruelty? And will you not
 “ suffer the little pledges of your own loves to
 “ touch you, and will you not pity the moans and
 “ tears of the poor infants? And will you refuse
 “ your aid which it is your duty to afford, and
 “ which depends upon you alone? In whose arms
 “ shall the sweet burthen be laid; on whose soft
 “ bosom shall the poor child recline? Who first
 “ shall taste the delight of the first smiles, listen
 “ to the first syllables, and the babbling of its
 “ lisping

“ lisping tongue? Ah, foolish woman! will
 “ you let another enjoy all this pleasure? Is it
 “ worth while to lose so much for the sake of
 “ preserving beauty and delicacy of shape?

“ You, who have better principles, by the bless-
 “ ing of heaven, take upon you whatever trouble
 “ and fatigue may attend this maternal duty,
 “ that you may preserve your own work, and
 “ perform the pious offices of a good mother.”

I must leave this passage to be dilated on by husbands who wish to inculcate the salutary doctrine which they contain. The verses gave me a high opinion of the taste and sensibility of their writer; and it would be a happy circumstance for *babes and sucklings* if they could be as persuasive as they are pleasing.

I will add another passage, *excellent* both for its advice and composition, on giving the child due exercise.

Nec minus inde agita, sublataque mollibus ulnis
 Interdum exerce leni corpuscula motu,
Multa hilari simul ore jocans : neque clausa reconde
 Usque domi in latebris, sed apertas defer in auras,
 Dum nullæ fudo nebulæ, dum purior æther,
 Et nitidum lenes ludunt per inane Favoni;

Ut

Ut cœlo et variâ gavifus imagine rerum
 Affuescat luci puer, Authoremque potentem
 Quà potis, admirans primis agnoscat ab annis.

“ Exercise their little bodies with a gentle
 “ motion, talking to them at the same time
 “ cheerfully. Neither keep them within doors
 “ always, but carry them into the open air,
 “ while the sky is serene, while the air is clear,
 “ and the zephyrs play around; that the little
 “ one, rejoicing at the sight of heaven and the
 “ various objects around him, may be accustom-
 “ ed to the light of day, and, struck with admi-
 “ ration, learn even from his infancy to venerate
 “ the Almighty Maker.”

Monfieur de St. Marthe, or Sammarthanus, as he is classically called, is a poet of the first class among the imitators of ancient elegance. He was born in 1536, and died in 1623.

Like the poets of his times, he has furnished a volume divided into *Lyrics, Elegies, Sylvæ, Epigrammata, et Cantica*, or Sacred Poems. The *Pædotrophia* is the best of his works; but he who has a taste for modern Latin poetry will find much entertainment in every part of the volume.

Subjoined

Subjoined to the poems are three books of *Elogia* in prose, which contain many entertaining biographical anecdotes of French literati, in a classical style, and a diction that, though it may perhaps be thought too florid, is yet engaging, because it is animated.

C H A P. XI.

Miscellaneous Literature — Of some Words and Passages in Bishop Taylor.

I HAVE often maintained the necessity of understanding Latin and Greek in order to understand English completely : and I have heard the doctrine controverted, and attributed to a pedantical desire of enhancing the value of the learned languages.

The authors of the last century afford many proofs of this necessity. I have accidentally noticed the following passages in the works of Bishop Taylor, and they appear to me to be decisive.

The Bishop says, in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, *The Arabian physicians endeavour to ELEVATE and lessen the miraculous conception.*

A mere English reader will either not understand this at all, or understand it in such a manner as to render it contradictory and nonsensical. He will understand *elevate* in its present signification, to raise or exalt ; whereas the author means quite the contrary, *to depress and to lower.* The Bishop had the Latin *elevare* in his

his mind, which signifies to diminish, detract from, or extenuate. In some editions the word is altered by somebody who did not understand it, and instead of "*elevate*" is printed "*alleviate*".

In the same page he says, "St. John was listened to by king and people, by doctors and by IDIOTS, by Pharisees and Sadducees."

A mere English reader will not fail to understand fools by idiots, and will conclude that the Bishop intended to say that St. John was attended to by wise men and fools. But as the Bishop means by the context to honour St. John, it is impossible to conceive that he would say, as a compliment to him, that he was listened to by *idiots* in the synonymous sense with *fools*. The truth is, that the Bishop had the Greek IDIOTAI in view, and only meant that St. John was listened to by all ranks and conditions, by the learned and the unlearned; for IDIOTAI signifies the common people, the vulgar herd, as distinguished from the learned, or people of distinction.

A great multitude of instances might be produced from the same learned author; but these happened to occur while I was reading his admirable little treatise inserted in the fourth chapter and first book of the *Ductor Dubitantium*, entitled, An instance of moral Demonstration, or a Conjugation

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jugation of Probabilities, proving that the Religion of Jesus Christ is from God. I advise my reader attentively to consider that excellent piece, not only as a most ingenious composition, but as exhibiting in a striking point many unanswerable arguments in favour of Christianity.

I beg leave to present him, as an inducement, with the following specimen, on the internal evidence of the divinity of the religion of Jesus Christ.

“ For it is a doctrine perfective of human nature, that teaches us to love God, and to love one another, to hurt no man, and to do good to every man; it *propines* to us the noblest, the highest, and the bravest pleasures of the world; the joys of charity, the rest of innocence, the peace of quiet spirits, the wealth of beneficence, and forbids us only to be beasts and to be devils; it allows all that God and nature intended, and only restrains the excrescencies of nature, and forbids us to take pleasure in that which is the only entertainment of devils, in murders and revenges, malice, and spiteful words and actions; it permits corporal pleasures where they can best minister to health and societies, to conversation of families, and honour of communities;

“ it

" it teaches men to keep their words, that them-
 " selves may be secured in all their just interests,
 " and to do good to others that good may be
 " done to them; it forbids biting one another,
 " that we may not be devoured by one another;
 " and commands obedience to superiours, that
 " we may not be ruined in confusions; it com-
 " bines governments, and confirms all good
 " laws, and makes peace, and opposes and pre-
 " vents wars where they are not just, and where
 " they are not necessary. It is a religion that
 " is life and spirit, not consisting in ceremonies
 " and external amusements, but in the services
 " of the heart, and the real fruit of lips and
 " hands, that is, of good words and good deeds;
 " it bids us to do that to God which is agreeable
 " to his excellencies, that is, worship him with
 " the best thing we have, and make all things
 " else minister to it; it bids us to do that to our
 " neighbour by which he may be better; it is
 " the perfection of the natural law, and agree-
 " able to our natural necessities, and promotes
 " our natural ends and designs: it does not de-
 " stroy reason, but instructs it in very many
 " things, and complies with it in all; it hath in
 " it both *heat* and *light*, and is not more effec-
 " tual than it is beauteous; it promises every
 " thing that we can desire, and yet promises
 " nothing but what it does effect; it proclaims

“ war against all vices, and generally does com-
 “ mand every virtue ; it teaches us with ease to
 “ mortifie those affections which reason durst
 “ scarce reprove, because she hath not strength
 “ enough to conquer ; and it does create in us
 “ those virtues which reason of herself never
 “ knew, and, after they are known, could never
 “ approve sufficiently. It is a doctrine in which
 “ nothing is superfluous or burdensome, nor yet
 “ is there any thing wanting which can procure
 “ happiness to mankind, or by which God can
 “ be glorified : and if wisdom, and mercy, and
 “ justice, and simplicity, and holiness, and pu-
 “ rity, and meekness, and contentedness, and
 “ charity, be images of God and rays of divi-
 “ nity, then that doctrine in which all these
 “ shine so gloriously, and in which nothing else
 “ is ingredient, must needs be from God ; and
 “ that all this is true in the doctrine of Jesus,
 “ needs no other probation but the reading the
 “ words.”

C H A P. XII.

The Absurdity of some religious Prints to Books of Devotion—the Bible—and Milton.

THERE can be no doubt but that they who added prints to religious books intended to assist the reader in raising in his mind clear and striking ideas of sacred things; but the artists they employed have commonly been so injudicious as to render figures of a most serious and solemn kind objects of derision.

All graphical representations of God the Father are to be disapproved; for, instead of exalting our idea of the Deity, they *elevate* or lower it. In thinking of GOD, imagination forms an obscure but grand image of a sublime existence, ΚΥΔΕΙ ΤΑΙΩΝ, and the heart adores it; but the hand of the artist at once diminishes its grandeur, and divests it of its glory. Think of the great God of heaven and earth drawn by a painter under the figure of a little old man with a long beard, sitting in an elbow chair.

The Scripture introduces God speaking or appearing with terrific majesty. *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord.*

Tremble thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob ; which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. It belongs to injudicious limners and sculptors to render this *presence* familiar. Hayman has one or two designs for Newton's Milton, in which God is introduced ; in that which is prefixed to the sixth book the Deity appears terrible, and the artist has shewn great skill ; but yet he can never equal imagination, and therefore his best efforts will appear defective. Obscurity aggrandizes images of celestial beings ; once delineate them on paper, and render the idea clear and determinate, and you put an end to the awe of the beholder.

I can easily understand, and readily admire, as a strong poetical figure, the touching of Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire ; but I cannot admire the engraver's representation of an angel from heaven with a blacksmith's tongs burning the poor prophet's lips with a live coal.

Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic incredulus odi.

HOR.

There is a great analogy between poetry and painting, but yet poetry may represent many things with great vivacity and beauty which will not bear an exact delineation on paper or canvas.

The

The representations of Satan in many serious books is so ridiculous, that one would almost imagine that the artist intended to laugh at the idea of such a being. Who can bear some prints of demoniacs, where the possessed are exhibited vomiting up little black devils with cloven feet and long tails? If artists thought such figures likely to excite or preserve devotion, they must have been as weak as their admirers.

But as they have erred by familiarity, so also from ill-placed grandeur. The Nativity has ever been the favourite subject of painters. Truth required that they should exhibit a stable; but, in order to dignify so mean a place, they usually introduce a superb and fluted column of the Grecian architecture. The ox, the ass, and the manger, are faintly exhibited, but the grand pillar strikes the spectator with ideas of sumptuous magnificence. The birth of our Saviour in this humiliating place was intended to recommend humility by the force of example: but the painter comes, and, by a strange metamorphosis, converts the stable to a gorgeous palace. The artifice intended to raise veneration causes contempt, and the apparent falsehood is highly indecent when it obtrudes itself among the pages of a Holy Bible.

Few books have had a greater popularity than the works of Bishop Taylor. Several of them are adorned with good plates by Faithorne ; but others are of a ridiculous kind. The frontispiece to the *Rules of holy dying* cannot but excite mirth even in those who do not habitually sit in the seat of the scorner. On one side is the statue of a clergyman in his canonicals, with the inscription on the base, *Mercurius Christianus*. In the clouds, opposite to him, is the figure of an old man, with a flag in one hand and a crown in the other, in a sitting posture, intended to represent Jesus Christ. My reader will immediately see the absurdity of introducing *Mercurius* in the same picture with our Saviour. On the other side is represented, in a most childish manner, hell and the devil. Here the figures are shockingly deformed ; but they are calculated to strike terror into none but children and those who labour under the weakest superstition. The book is excellent, and has been read by the devout with great edification. It is to be regretted that it was deformed by such a picture, which appears to be dictated by folly, and is ludicrous in the eyes of every sensible observer ;

—possit duci quia sine istis.

HOR.

The prints inserted in the Common Prayer Books are of a kind which none but the ignorant

rant and vulgar can admire ; and even they can receive no advantage from them. Such persons may be diverted from devotion by them, instead of being guided to it, or animated in it. That entitled Jesus tempted by the Devil, is almost as ludicrous as if it had come from Hogarth or Bunbury. The devil has a crown and sceptre, a modern coat, apparently a pair of boots, and from his rump hangs a tail resembling what is called a pig tail.

Endeavours to represent the Trinity by a triangle might be spared. The miraculous gift of tongues has been lowered in the reader's conception by the painter's art. In most sculptures angels are too much familiarized to be revered.

In Sparke's Feasts and Fasts there is an engraving to represent our Saviour's Passion. He is drawn praying in the garden, and supposed to be saying—*Father, if thou wilt, take this CUP from me, &c.* And there appeared an angel from heaven comforting him. The cup is in this place evidently a figurative expression ; but the artist represents an angel actually reaching out of the clouds a real cup in the form of a common drinking glass or rummer, and handing it in the attitude of a tavern-waiter with a glass of wine.

Nelson's Festivals is an excellent book, and a great favourite with all the devout. I am concerned that it should be disgraced by two paltry plates, as frontispieces, which lessen the reverence due to the whole subject. On the back ground of one are our Saviour and Satan on the mountain. Satan is represented with a tail, as usual; and, if he had not wings, would present the idea of a cat standing upon her hinder legs. It is improbable that any Christian can be delighted or improved by such figures; but it is certain that many may be offended and lose that veneration for sacred things which was favourable to their virtue and their peace.

By inspecting popular books of devotion many other absurd prints might easily be pointed out; but I mean not to encrease the ridicule. I wish all such disgraceful prints could be torn out and committed to the flames. What an idea must a Mahometan or a sensible Indian entertain of Christianity, when he sees such silly figures in books sanctioned by the most awful authority?

I know it will be said that such prints are intended only for weak brethren and sisters, for children, and old men and women in their dotage. Perhaps this is true; but others unavoidably see them, and they suggest a ridiculous idea on sacred

cred subjects, not easily to be banished when once admitted. He who has so far divested himself of natural awe as to laugh at what is venerable, will not, without a greater effort than most men are willing to make, raise in his mind a due degree of respect in the contemplation of heaven itself and its King.

The greatest painters whom the world has yet seen have shewn that they were able to represent sacred subjects, not only without lowering them, but with great addition to their inherent sublimity. They chose grand subjects, and their genius expanded to grasp the magnitude. Such, and such only, may be imitated by the little artists who draw for common books of devotion; but I think it would be a good rule, never to represent either the God omnipotent, or the Evil Spirit, embodied. Painters should not deviate into heathenism by confounding Jehovah with Jupiter, or Satan with Pluto. What mortal hand shall presume to paint him in a mortal form and a material vestment, who is diffused over all space, and who cloaths himself with light as with a garment?

Let the limner practise an excellent rule suggested by Horace for the poet:

Quæ desperat tractata nitescere posse relinquat.

C H A P. XIII.

*The Happiness of a Life of innocent Obscurity—
Inconveniencies attending Fame—Vanity—Am-
bition.*

THE Choice of Hercules, and other pieces of a similar tendency to be found among the ancient moralists, were a beautiful and efficacious mode of conveying a fine moral lesson. They powerfully stimulated the minds of young persons to neglect the blandishments of vice, and to follow virtue over the rugged steep that leads to glory. Hercules made an honourable choice; and his example was intended to fire the soul with emulative ardour.

Ambition is useful, as it calls for those fine exertions which contribute to meliorate the condition of man, to improve all that Providence has allotted him, to perfect art, and adorn society. Happy it is for the public that man is so formed as, for the sake of fame, to relinquish ease, and devote his time, his health, his life, to labours, which, while they dignify himself, enrich, embellish, and aggrandize an empire.

And great is the pleasure attendant on exertion; and sweet the reward of applauding fellow-
4 creatures,

creatures, when the exertion is virtuous and successful.

Magnum iter intendo ; sed dat mihi gloria vires.

But there is a great deal of unsuccessful exertion in pursuit of fame, and many, after sowing in pain and labour, reap only a harvest of disappointment.

For the sake of those and of others who find not opportunities to distinguish themselves, it is useful to suggest consolatory topics, and such as point out the pains and penalties of fame, and the ease of a life of inglorious retirement. Nor is it fair to attribute whatever is said on this side of the question to the same motive which induced the fox to exclaim, that the grapes were sour. There are certainly a thousand solid comforts to be enjoyed in a state of obscurity, which are bartered for the flattering distinction of popular applause.

He who is labouring to emerge from obscurity, and whose mottoes are the spirited passages of Virgil,

——tentanda via est quâ me quoque possum
Tollere humo, victorque virum volitare per ora.—

——aliquid jamdudum invadere magnum
Mens agitat mihi NEC PLACIDA CONTENTA QUIETE EST.

VIRG.

immediately draws upon himself the watchful eyes of competition. His equals, over whom he attempts to rise, shoot at him from the ground the shafts of envy, and those who have already risen, assail him from the turret with the missile weapons of jealousy. The success and final result of his attempts are doubtful; but the wounds and arrows of outrageous enemies are, in the mean time, sensibly felt, and often inflict on his peace a wound incurable.

When a man is once rendered conspicuous, once become the subject of conversation, not only those who envy his distinction, but those who, from want of sense or of knowledge, misunderstand his conduct, employ themselves by secret influence or open enmity to reduce him to their own level.

The greatest excellence is the most likely to be misunderstood; for few are qualified to be competent judges of singular pre-eminence. According to a just opinion, they who would form a judgment in learning, in arts, or in life, of an exalted degree of perfection, must themselves possess it, and be able, while they give the criticism, to exhibit the example.

From the malice of envy, the mistakes of ignorance, the levity of thoughtlessness, it is impossible

possible that he who is lifted up and become a mark should not frequently be wounded with a poisoned arrow. If he has sensibility, his condition must be painful though it may be exalted. Like the traveller on a bleak hill, he must bide the pelting of the pitiless storm, and envy the shepherd in the vale his hovel and his cot.

The smallest specks are most visible in the whitest raiment. The common infirmities of human nature, arising from bodily sickness or momentary ill-temper, are noticed in conspicuous characters, and exaggerated by malicious ingenuity. They are remembered long, and perhaps never forgiven. In a common man who would have taken notice of such peccadilloes as are handed to posterity of Samuel Johnson? The little infirmities of the man have given such offence, as to prejudice many against the writer.

But he will not be troubled with externals only. He has within him a restless spirit, which suffers not his eyelids to close in the soft hours when unambitious mortals enjoy the sweetest slumber; while others taste

—————Νηδυμον υπνον.—————

Μαλακω δεδμημενοι υπνω,—————

of him it may be said

—————ου χρη πανυχιον ευδειν.

A state

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A state of solicitude cannot but lose many solid satisfactions, though it should be allowed, as is indeed true, that the alternate excitation of hope and fear is attended with considerable delight, in consequence of the exercise it affords.

It were easy to add on this subject an abundance of common-place remarks on ambition, glory, vanity, fame, ease, retirement; but this kind of common place, which every one allows to be true and solid, every one neglects, because, like the sun, it is self-evident and familiar. I wish to draw my reflections from real observations on life.

Respicere exemplar vitæ et veras hinc ducere voces.

From real observation then I am able to pronounce that persons who live in their families a regular and temperate life, performing their relative, social, and religious duties, appear to enjoy more tranquillity and self-possession than the various tribes that are for ever struggling to emerge from the level on which their birth and circumstances have placed them. Ever restless, they taste not the pleasure of repose; and, as the desires of ambition, like those of avarice, encrease with possession, they are strangers to contentment as long as they live, that is, to the sweetest ingredient of life.

When

When it is considered that, besides the certainty of incurring slander and misrepresentation, and feeling much uneasiness, and foregoing many most desirable comforts, the ambitious are also in danger of infamy where they expected fame, and contempt where they demanded honour, they will, it is to be hoped, repress their ardour, and learn to seek enjoyment in governing themselves and their families according to wisdom and justice. And let them not think that the public service is deserted by them; for when every man, according to the Scripture rule, studies to be quiet, and to mind his own business, the public will be better served than by the officious and pragmatistical activity of the vain.

Though the favour and applause of men may gratify vanity, and promote pecuniary interest for a few years, yet of how little value will they appear at the close of life? Men know but little of each others real character and merit, and frequently err by undervaluing and overvaluing them. They have lavished fame and glory on the undeserving, and denied them to their greatest benefactors.

Milton had very little reputation as a poet while alive. And as to posthumous fame,

Si post fata venit gloria sera venit.

Churchhill

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Churchhill had a thousand times more popularity while he lived than Milton. He owed his popularity to politics. It interested the factions of the times. Milton's times were factious and turbulent enough ; but he did not write political poetry. And violent partizans cared little for old Adam and Eve, and the blisful scenes of Eden's Garden.

Men are so apt to envy, to err, and to be ungrateful, that a wise man will take care, if possible, not to let the fabric of his happiness rest on a pillar so tottering as the peoples favour. He will endeavour to do good and to act reasonably, and leave popularity to follow her own caprice, and not let it be said of him

Palma negatum macrum, donata reducit opimum.

HOR.

It is the great business of Christians to rise above the world, to do right actions, not as men pleasers, but unto God and their own consciences ; and happy they who quietly walk in their pilgrimage through this world through the vale of peace, neither pursuing fame, nor declining it when it comes as the temporal reward of goodness, but looking for applause of Him who seeth the heart, and whose approbation is the only true glory.

But

But even here man must be on his guard against vain-glory; for many have appeared to be religious, and to despise glory, who were anxiously seeking it, deceiving themselves and others. *Sæpe homo*, says St. Austin, *de vano gloriæ contemptu, vanius gloriatur.*

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAP. I.

Religious Subjects neglected from Prejudice—their Importance.—They are Moral Philosophy under a stronger Sanction.

I HOPE my readers will not think that I deviate into an uninteresting subject, when, in the course of the Winter Evenings, I am sometimes led to consider that which is the business of every man, and far more important than the finest disquisitions in Science, Ethics, Arts, and the Belles Lettres.

———id, quod

Æquè pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè,
Æquè, neglectum, pueris, senibusque nocebit.

The present season of Christmas naturally leads to the contemplation of religion. Indeed a subject in which all men are at all times deeply concerned, can never be unseasonable.

I am sorry to observe, that such subjects should be considered as dull. But I was surprised a
little

little while ago, on mentioning my design to touch on religious topics, to hear from a sensible man, that he wished I would not, as I might depend upon it, my book would be more generally acceptable if religious topics were entirely excluded. "If you write a religious book, he said, you must expect few readers but old women with their spectacles; you will stand no chance of getting rid of the copies, unless the Societies for promoting religious knowledge, and for the propagation of the Gospel, should think proper to give them away."

This prejudice against religious books, which I fear is too prevalent among those who call themselves men of pleasure, gaiety, and fashion, is very unfortunate, as it tends to cut off some of the best opportunities of deriving a knowledge of that which through ignorance alone they despise.

Indeed, it must be acknowledged, that in the great abundance of religious books for which this country is remarkable, there are many which rather injure the cause which they were written to advance. They were perhaps only written for a particular sect or persuasion, and when they fall into the hands of those who are not attached to any party, but judge from their own reason and unbiassed sentiments, they excite ideas unfavourable

vourable to religion in general. A poor style, wretched arguments, cant, hypocrisy, fanaticism, will give a disgust to the sober-minded, and much more to those who are little inclined to serious ideas, however well recommended by a polished style, and a dispassionate appeal to reason.

Such books may perhaps produce a good effect among those classes for whom they were intended, though they appear to persons of education, replete with gross absurdity. They are not therefore to be utterly despised, though they may be neglected; and it is unfair and ill judged to form an idea of all religion and all religious treatises from the zealous but poor attempts of illiterate enthusiasts. It is like forming a judgment of poetry from the works of Tom D'Urfey. Though, be it always remembered, that the disciples were poor fishermen, that religion may be understood without critical erudition; and that many a good man without learning has comprehended the vital and essential parts of religion better than the most learned professor of theology in the most celebrated university. While the one was inspecting dictionaries, the other was examining his own heart; while the one was toiling at languages, the other was engaged in labours of love.

There

There are in the English language great numbers of religious books which cannot fall under the censure of absurdity, but are at once rational and beautiful. I wish my reader to enter on the study of religion by reading them, and he will afterwards relish real piety wherever he finds it, even though it should appear in a style of rude simplicity.

But many fashionable freethinkers are much conversant in polite and classical authors, and to pass from them to some of the simple works of mere devotees is too violent a transition. It is for that reason that I recommend to them the sermons of the best writers; and hope they will not be so far prejudiced against them as to condemn them unexamined.

After a taste shall have been formed for religious subjects from the works of Addison, Hooker, Hammond, Taylor, Grotius, Bishop Bull, Dr. Lardner, Locke, Clarke, and the sermon writers of the first class, the mind will learn to take a pleasure in those books of humble piety where the excellence of the thoughts and doctrines must shine by its own lustre, unadorned with the graces of language.

It is natural to suppose, that human enquiry will be most willingly conversant on the most important

ant subjects. Life, death, and immortality, have in them an inherent value, in comparison with which all other things appear like dust in the balance. There are consequently more books, I believe, in divinity than in any other department.

But can I, after so many and so valuable labours, add any thing useful? I fear not; yet as religion is a subject that must frequently be considered by all who think with seriousness, I have also frequently considered it, and shall beg leave to write my thoughts of it with that humility which becomes all men, and which perhaps may be particularly required in me.

I am struck with awe at the very subject. A poor frail mortal sits down to examine the works and words of his omnipotent Maker. If he should mistake in his conclusions, he may offend his God, and lead others into dangerous temptation.

But he is encouraged by example. He is encouraged by the authority which commissions many to expound the Scriptures, and to teach the people. And if errors are errors of judgment only, unaccompanied with presumption, there is every reason to believe them venial.

The prejudices against religious writings are highly unreasonable; for what is religion but moral philosophy under a higher sanction than the best human reason could give it; what but the best efforts of human reason, controlled and directed by the will of God?

And can it be illiberal and narrow, or in any respect unworthy the most exalted of the human race, to study this will of God? to trace the beams of celestial light wherever the least glimmering appears in this darkling vale.

The study of divinity, or Christian philosophy, is a sublime employment of our faculties worthy of the greatest philosophers. What are mathematics, languages, arts, to the contemplation of the great fountain of all knowledge, of all beauty, of all excellence, the Father of Lights?

To neglect the topics of religion in my Winter Evenings would, I think, be a culpable omission; and I hope few readers are so little attentive to their chief concern as to think whatever is said on that subject unimportant.

After so much has been written in this country by the heroes of Christianity, I can indeed
hope

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hope to add but little; but if I only turn the attention of a few to the subject, the attempt will not be useless; and what pleasure arising from polite letters and classical knowledge can equal that of seeking for oneself, and shewing to others, the THINGS THAT BELONG UNTO PEACE?

C H A P. II.

The parochial Priest—Dr. Burton's Latin Poem entitled Sacerdos Parœcialis rusticus—Of the Government of a Parish—The Necessity in the present Age of being assisted by the opulent Parishioners, in accomplishing a Reformation of Manners.

IN the estimation of reason few, if any, employments are more honourable than that of the pastor of a parish, the true Πομπη Λαων. It is the business of his life to diffuse happiness and knowledge. His own wants and those of his family require some regard to pecuniary emolument, and justify an endeavour to obtain a competency; but his attention to lucre is but secondary and subordinate. His professional employment, and the purpose of his life, is the communication of happiness and knowledge: a most honourable profession, to be seeking wisdom at the fountain, and to be dispensing it to all who ask for it.

I am speaking of the profession, not of the professors. I am aware that many a satirical tongue will be ready to detract from them, when compared to the profession in theory, and to ex-

aggerate those human frailties in them which in others they would palliate. But when I descend from the profession to the professors, I think I may affirm, that in no rank of society are more respectable members to be found than in the clerical. They ought, it will be said, to be superior in learning and virtue to others, as the master should excel his scholars, and as their studies and education tend to the advancement of human excellence to its highest perfection. Human frailty excepted, they have been, and often are, what they ought to be in the eye of reasonable expectation. It is not possible to satisfy the demands of fanaticism, puritanism, and enthusiasm.

Dr. John Burton seems to have viewed the character of a parish-priest with singular admiration. He frequently speaks of it with a degree of rapture. The following passage from his *Sacerdos Paræcialis* is pleasing.

O felix studii, qui non ingloria ruris
 Otia tutus agit, procul ambitione metuque !
 Qui recolens quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque
 Providus æternæ meditatur seria vitæ
 Gaudia despiciens peritura ; Deoque vocanti,
 Cujus sacra gerit, magno lætatus honore,
 Impendit curas, animamque relinquit in astris.
 Non illum potuit Syren, damnosa voluptas,
 Flectere, non miseros agitans discordia cives,

Nec

Nec malefuadus honos, nec lucri prava cupido;
 Sed pietas, cœlumque fides amplexa, remotum
 Ad majora vocat; fortunam dona ferentem
 Subjiciens pedibus rigidique pericula fati,
 Atque alio patriam monstrans sub sole jacentem.
 Felix qui, latè turbantibus æquora ventis,
 Civiles tuta prospectat ab arce tumultus,
 Immunis culpæ, simul immunisque pericli
 Cætera securus sancto vacat usque labori
 Sedulus et populo prodesse Deoque placere.

He proceeds to exemplify the character by the instances of Bernard Gilpin, Hooker, Herbert, and Hales. A long list might be added of men, of whom it is doubtful whether they had not acquired a participation of angelic perfection even in this low abode. They seem to have been sent by Providence as models of excellence, to shew at what height human nature can arrive by its virtuous efforts, assisted with divine grace, notwithstanding its weakness and corruption.

Many no less exemplary than these have died unknown,

—————caruerunt quia vate sacro,—————

Multitudes who lived in the practice of every Christian virtue, and died in the faith, truly saints, if any mortal can possess that title, now sleep in peace, with nothing over their graves but the green-sward. In the estimation of heaven, it is

probable, that they were deemed more worthy of a mausoleum than kings and conquerors.

As a tree is known by its fruits, let Christianity be tried by the virtuous men it has produced. I do not think that the most celebrated philosophers among the heathens have equalled the virtue of many parish-priests, who spent their days in the uniform practice of piety and benevolence, of many whose lives are accurately recorded, and of thousands more who lived and died in the obscurity which they loved, in the straw-roofed vicarage of some sequestered hamlet.

But objectors are inclined to complain that the labours of the parish-priest are not often attended with any remarkable effect; that parishes continue profligate notwithstanding the preaching and example of the most pious and learned incumbent. They may, it is true, be profligate notwithstanding these advantages; but is it not reasonable to believe that they would be more profligate without them?

But that the clergy may possess all that weight which their characters, their instructions, and their services entitle them to, it is necessary that the richer and higher orders in their parishes should set an example of paying them respect, and co-operate with them in securing, as far as is possible, a regular and decent observation of the Lord's Day.

The

The great requisite is, to give the clergyman of the parish AUTHORITY. But the esquire and justice of peace are often jealous of his influence, and, instead of augmenting, are usually ready to diminish his power by vexatious opposition. They form a party to carry every point against him in the vestry; little considering, that, in lowering the *persona ecclesiæ*, or the parson, they contribute to destroy the subordination of society, and to lessen themselves in the eyes of their inferiors. The clergy and gentry should mutually and cordially assist each other in promoting good morals, good order, and every thing conducive to social peace and to humble industry.

These are not times in which ecclesiastics unassisted by the laity can do much towards the reformation of the public. They were once viewed with a reverence which secured obedience to their exhortations; but this was before the general prevalence of infidelity. The lowest of the vulgar have now learned to talk of the national religion as a mode of superstition, and to despise its ministers, especially when a demand is made on their property. I have seen low persons who revenged the exaction of tythes, not only on the rectors and vicars, but on the Church, on the Christian religion, and on the Bible.

Those among the inferior ranks, who still retain a reverence for religion, are too often seduced by methodists from the parish church, and endeavour to evince their zeal and attachment to their self-appointed pastors, by professing a contempt, if not a hatred, for the regular minister of the parish. His endeavour to preserve the dignity of his order is stigmatized as pride, his claim of his just dues as avarice, his rational style of preaching as the cold and languid performance of one who is labouring for hire in an employment which he dislikes.

These opinions are disseminated with industry, and thus the lower part of the parish are soon divided into two parts, equally inclined to obstruct the beneficial operations of the minister, the sceptical and profligate on the one hand, and the enthusiastic on the other; unless therefore the better sort unite with him, and give him that power which is necessary to accomplish the purposes of his profession, he is in danger of being set at nought, and all his endeavours may be rendered ineffectual.

A clergyman has often a difficult part to act. The times are such, that all the richer and higher people of his parish affect to be people of fashion. They bring into the village the manners and
amusement

amusements of the metropolis. If, on one hand, he refuses to join in them, he is an unwelcome visitor among the rich ; and if, on the other, he is seen too much engaged by them, he is despised by the poor.

The rich should allow him to be singular and reserved, without thinking him disagreeable or unfashionable. He is a public character, and stands connected with all the parish, of whatever degree, in a very intimate and important relation. It is his duty to serve both rich and poor, and in making himself agreeable to one, he must not so far forget the other as to neglect his duty and to give offence. But nothing in clergymen gives greater offence to the poor than *avoir du monde*.

Whether he may possess the graceful and polite accomplishments or not, the rich parishioners should make it a point to support him with their countenance, in all the duties of his office. This support of the richer parishioners appears to me to be the principal thing wanted to render the clergy efficient in promoting the great purposes of their institution.

C H A P. III.

Learning—Some Inconveniencies attending the present Pursuit of it unknown to former Ages—Multitude of Books.

WHILE the objects of learning are encreased, the time to be spent in pursuit of it, according to the modes of modern life, is greatly contracted. Every year produces some valuable work in some department of science or polite letters, and the accomplished scholar is expected, and cannot but wish to give it some attention. The art of printing has multiplied books to such a degree, that it is a vain attempt either to collect or to read all that is excellent, much more all that has been published. It becomes necessary, therefore, to read in the classical sense of the word, *LEGERE*, that is, to *pick out*, to select the most valuable and worthiest objects, not only the best parts of books, but, previously to that selection, to chuse out of an infinite number, the best books, or at least those which are best adapted to our particular pursuit or employment in life. Without this care there is danger of confusion and distraction, of a vain labour, and of that poverty which arises from superfluity.

Inopem me copia fecit.

The

The surface of the globe becomes every day more known, enlarges the field of modern history, geography, botany, and furnishes new opportunities for the study of human nature. At the revival of learning, voyages and travels constituted a very small part of the scholar's and philosopher's library; but at present, in England only, the books of this class are sufficiently numerous to fill a large museum. He who would understand human nature must inspect them, and he will also find it necessary to have recourse to the Dutch and the French travellers. A man might find employment for his life in reading itineraries alone.

The late great improvements in science have multiplied books necessary to be read by the general scholar to a wonderful extent. The volumes of scientific and literary societies or academies are infinite. The mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms have been accurately examined, and the result brought to public view, in crowded and bulky tomes. The minutest productions of nature have been described with prolixity; from the hyssop on the wall to the cedar of Lebanon, from the atom to the mountain, from the mite to man, the whale and the elephant.

The study of antiquities has added greatly to the number of books. Politics, history, and law, have crowded the library.

The field of divinity has been most industriously cultivated, and the harvest has been rich. The age of Methusalem would be too short to read all the theological works of English divines; to which must be added the excellent productions of France, Holland, and other neighbouring nations. Biblical learning alone, so pregnant is the sacred volume, would occupy a long life, exclusively of all attention to practical theology.

Moral philosophy, both systematical and miscellaneous, is so far extended, that if it is all necessary to the conduct of life, every man must die without knowing how to live; for the longest life would not afford opportunities for its study.

Philology and criticism have appeared in books which equal, or exceed in number and size, all the original works which it was their prime intention to elucidate.

A species of books, unknown to the ancients, and such as are found to attract more readers than

than any others, has arisen in the last century ; I mean romances and fictitious histories of private and familiar life, under the name of Novels.

Add to all this a vast quantity of poetry or verse of all kinds, and on all subjects ; add tragedies and comedies ; add pamphlets in all their variety, fugitive papers, publications of diurnal intelligence, and the sum becomes so great as to lead the student to a degree of despair.

I have already said, that not only the work to be done has encreased upon us, but the time of doing it has decreased, according to the modes of living which now prevail.

Early rising is not in vogue. Breakfast, with all the apparatus of tea-drinking, occupies a long time. The hair must be dressed with taste, or the student will find his learning will not give him admission into the company of people of condition and fashion, nor indeed into any company.

The newspapers must be read ; else conversation may lose one of its most abundant sources. The coffee-house perhaps claims an hour. Morning calls must be made, and cards left in key-holes or with servants, or friendship and patronage may be irrecoverably lost. A
L 6 morning

morning walk or ride will conduce to an appetite, and the person must be dressed from head to foot before a genteel student can think of meeting company at dinner. Very little time, it is evident, can be found in the midst of all these necessary occupations for poring over folios. To neglect any of them for his book a man may be in danger of being called an odd fellow, and dismissed to Coventry.

But the morning loss, you will say, may be recovered by the diligence of the afternoon. Impossible; for the hour of dining is the same which in the days of that polite scholar and fine gentleman, Sir Philip Sydney, used to be the supper time: and convivial pleasures are so great, as to render him who should relinquish them for musty books obnoxious to the imputation of an ascetic or a bookworm. Indeed the mind is unfit for contemplation after a full meal and a generous glass. Various amusements intervene to employ the time till the hour of repose closes the season both of action and contemplation.

While so much is to be done and so little is the time, how can we expect to find many profoundly learned? And yet there is as much pretension to learning, and as much volubility upon all subjects of science as could be expected

in

in the most erudite age. How is this phenomenon accounted for?

In the first place, *superficial learning*, quite enough to qualify talkers, and to satisfy common hearers, is easily picked up by reading the newspapers, and periodical pamphlets, in which little scraps are dealt out, like small wares at a retail shop for the convenience of the poor, who, though they have no store-room, make shift to live from hand to mouth, and hide their poverty.

In the next and the principal place, a reliance ON GENIUS, as it is called, without application, gives a boldness of utterance and assertion, which often sets off base metal with the glitter of gold. Never was an age when there were so many pretenders TO GENIUS. The great art is, under the confidence of genius, to make the most advantageous display of the little learning you have, to disparage what you have not, to put a good face upon defect, and supply weakness and want of real courage by a noisy confidence and boisterous pretension to *native* powers, above the reach of application. It is not uncommon to throw contempt upon all who shew, by their willingness to labour in pursuit of knowledge, a persuasion that, though a man may be born with powers to acquire knowledge, yet he is
not

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not born with knowledge acquired, with innate science, history, philosophy, and languages.

Knowledge may be acquired by one man sooner than by another, and in much greater abundance; but it must be acquired by application, since it is neither innate, nor can be mechanically infused.

And since the field of knowledge is enlarged, and the time to be spent in cultivating it contracted, it is requisite that the student should select a little part of the field only for cultivation, and by husbanding his time, so as to dig and manure it well, to carry home a good crop of corn, while others are contented with spontaneous weeds, leaves, thorns, thistles, chaff, and underwood.

Let him enjoy the prospect of the fine country around as far as the horizon extends; but let him be satisfied with cultivating a little *ferme ornée* well laid-out, prettily diversified, and within a moderate enclosure.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Benevolence of the Age.

Sui memores alios fecêre.

IF any one should be disposed to censure with uncharitable severity the vicious manners of the present age, I should wish to lead him through the environs of London, and point out to him the modern palaces erected for the poor and the afflicted of all denominations. These, I would say, are the trophies of Christianity; and these, we are taught to hope, shall cover a multitude of sins, and plead powerfully in favour of transgressors at the mercy-seat of the Most High.

I was walking one fine morning in St. George's Fields, when the sun shone delightfully, and gilded the spires of the numerous churches in my view, and seemed to smile on the windows of the various public edifices devoted to charity around me; when I could not help exclaiming, Surely the great Father of us all, when he looks down with indignation on the crying sins of yon great city, will turn with complacency to these monuments of charity, and blot out whole pages from the tremendous volume, where he records the offences of his favourite creature.

I went

I went on musing on the multitude of charitable institutions by which this country is honourably distinguished; and, though former times have many illustrious examples of munificence to produce, yet I congratulated myself on being born in an age in which Christian charity never shone with greater lustre.

I confined myself, amidst the multitude of noble examples which occurred, to those which have appeared within a few years, and which have been seen by the race of mortals now alive.

One of the first which was suggested to my memory was that of Mr. Hetherington. I do not recollect that any particular provision had been made for the necessitous blind, labouring under the additional burden of old age; though from the dictates of common sense and the example of our blessed Saviour, it might obviously have been concluded, that the blind are in a peculiar manner objects of Christian charity.

Mr. Hetherington has provided comfort for fifty of these objects in perpetual succession, by an annuity of ten pounds a year each, during the remainder of their dark pilgrimage. He set a noble and almost singular example by bestowing his benefaction while he was yet alive, and the
example

example has been most honourably followed by Mr. Coventry, who has made a similar provision for thirty more, with a like exemplary bounty.

He again has been imitated by a benefactor, who, chusing to do good clandestinely, has alleviated the misfortune of an additional thirty, and left it to heaven only to record his name.

At the very mention of Jonas Hanway, all that is benevolent rises to the recollection. The marine society has two effects so important, the providing for the poor vagabond, and the raising of a nursery of seamen, that it is no wonder the name of Hanway, to whom it owes its greatest obligations, is held in high rank among the benefactors to this country.

Who ever ventured to appear the public advocate of the chimney-sweeper but Jonas Hanway? The poor infant of five or six years old, without shoes or stockings, almost naked, almost starved, driven up the narrow flue of a high chimney, driven by the menaces and scourges of an imperious master, and sometimes terrified with flames! Think of this, ye mothers who caress your infants in your laps—think of it, and whenever you meet the poor sooty babes,

babes, drop a pittance in their hands, and they shall smile in gratitude, and seek a solace of their woe in the purchase of an apple or a cake; and, at the same time, exert your interest and abilities, like Jonas Hanway, in preventing the employment of babes in a work under which the hardened veteran might sink with pain, terror, and fatigue. There was indeed no species of misery which this indefatigable philanthropist did not endeavour to relieve. Happy, had his abilities as a writer equalled his zeal as a man. But his excellent plans were sometimes neglected, or contemned, through a deficiency of proper eloquence to recommend them. But for what he intended, and what he performed, his name shall be handed down to late posterity, while his bust stands erected by gratitude among the tombs of kings, and greater than kings, those who, though private persons, enlightened the understanding and alleviated the miseries of their fellow creatures.

Of Mr. Howard's heroic philanthropy the world wants no monument more honourable than the eager plaudits of his own countrymen. By a strange forgetfulness, the state of prisons in this and other countries was deplorably neglected, and a degree of punishment was inflicted by the cold, the dampness, the filthiness, the wretched diet and accommodation, and the consequent diseases

diseases of the dungeon, far greater than the most rigorous severity of the most sanguinary laws ever intended. Mr. Howard, by visiting the prisons, by suggesting improvements in them, by causing a sense of shame in the conductors of them, and by raising a general attention to the subject, has already diffused a gleam of comfort in the dark mansion, where misery unutterable sat and pined unpitied in hopeless agony. Loaded with chains, confined with iron bars and massy walls, the guiltless prisoner heaved his sighs, and poured his tears, and listened to the clock which once called him to cheerful industry, but which now only reminded him of the slow progress of the tardy hour. Every one breathed contagion, and whether he deserved death or not for his crime, he was likely to incur it in the loathsome prison with all the aggravation of lingering languor. Great as was his misery, few gave themselves the trouble to notice it. Many feared infection if they approached to examine, and many, disgusted with the infamy of the guilty, scarcely acknowledged that the prisoner deserved compassion. But Mr. Howard, regardless of ease and life, incurred every danger, and quite forgot *their failings in their woe*.

But it is unnecessary to dwell on Mr. Howard's praise. Fortunately the public have taken it up; and there is some danger lest panegyric should

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should be carried to an excess which frustrates its own intent, by creating a sense of satiety.

The Society for the relief of Prisoners confined for Small Debts deserves to participate Mr. Howard's fame.

Many were the prejudices formed against the society instituted for the recovery of drowned persons; but let any one place himself a moment in the situation of a parent suddenly bereaved of his child, and, if he is not unfeeling in his nature, he will want no argument to induce him to give it every encouragement. Doubts were once entertained of its success, but they may be now removed by ocular demonstration. It is indeed a most affecting sight to behold those who were snatched from the jaws of death walking on the public days in solemn procession, and paying a grateful obedience to their benefactors.

The Dispensaries established, and liberally supported in various parts of the metropolis, are an additional proof of the indefatigable beneficence of the present age.

But I know many will be ready to detract from the institutors and benefactors, and to say, that these plausible charities are begun and supported by many who mean no more than to gratify

tify their vanity, or promote their interest. There is reason to suspect that this may, in some instances, be true, but not in all; and while so much good is produced, it is narrow and invidious to derogate from the promoters of it, by attributing their activity to selfish incitements.

What can be said of the thousands of unambitious and disinterested persons who eagerly crowd to present their guineas in contribution to every useful mode of beneficence for which their assistance is publicly solicited? It would be no less unreasonable than mean to attribute their bounty to vanity, or any other sinister consideration. To avoid the very suspicion, many give most ample donations and conceal their names; but those who do not, ought in candour to be supposed desirous of diffusing the influence of their example and authority, rather than of seeking the applause of the world, and the reputation of generosity.

Of the various hospitals which surround the great city, and form a better defence for it than the strongest fortification, I have said nothing, because they were chiefly founded in preceding times; and I wished on the present occasion to be confined to recent instances, and to such as
have

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have occurred within the memory of the rising generation.

From all of them I am led to conclude, that the benevolent virtues are by no means diminished among us, but that they flourish more and more under the guidance of judgment and experience; and may they still flourish, and may every one be anxious to have a share in them, that he may have something to veil the multitude of his transgressions when he shall be summoned to give up his account at the tribunal of an omniscient and almighty judge.

C H A P. V.

Of Sunday Schools.

IN this free country a strict plan of police cannot easily be established and carried into complete execution. Preventive measures and summary proceedings would often infringe that liberty which is an Englishman's glory. The consequence is, that capital punishments are more frequent here than in absolute governments.

But capital punishments, though shocking in their nature, and conducted so as to strike terror, are yet found experimentally insufficient to promote a general reformation. They cut down the tree that bears evil fruit; but it would be a more successful method to graft the stock with a more generous cion. If it is possible to meliorate the root, the tree that would otherwise have only cumbered the ground, will in time mature its beautiful blossoms to clusters of fruit equally useful and delicious.

But in what manner shall the reformation begin? Old offenders may be sometimes restrained by fear, but seldom admit an entire renovation.

Therefore

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Therefore the experiment must chiefly be made on the young.

The children of the rich are usually educated with considerable expence. Whether the methods in which they are trained are the best that could be contrived or not, it is certain that the rich cannot, from their state of independence, fall under the regulation of the charitable. Poor children then are the objects on which charity must exert herself in her endeavours to effect a national reform.

The majority of every nation must of necessity consist of the poor: and if the majority can be improved, there is great reason to suppose that many in the minority will receive benefit from the example; and that, upon the whole, so much good will be produced as may be said to meliorate the morals of the whole people.

Charity-schools were established with this laudable intention; and, though many plausible objections have been made to them, yet there is reason to think that, as far as they extended, they contributed considerably to the accomplishment of their original purpose. But though they are numerous, they are by no means universal;

and, on their present plan, they cannot possibly comprehend all the poor children of a populous parish.

To supply their defects, and to serve a thousand desirable purposes, Mr. Raikes of Gloucester has instituted Sunday Schools. To the honour of the age, his example has been eagerly followed. The plan is at present only in its infancy. Time and experience can alone shew, in a full and infallible light, its real utility. It is proper, however, to render it an object of general attention, that it may have the advantage of a fair trial.

They who know how much time is necessary for the instruction of children, will entertain doubts whether an hour or two, after an intermission of six days, will be sufficient for any great purpose, and whether the little that is then learned will not be obliterated from the memory by the natural effect of time, and the intervention of a variety of objects which have no relation to the Sunday's lesson. Boys who go to school spend seven or eight hours every day in the week, for a year or two, before they learn to read with competent facility.

This cannot be denied ; but then it should be considered that the superintendant may set a short task to be learned in the course of the week, such as the child can attend to with advantage under the eye of the parents, who, though they should not be able to read, may yet, by their authority, take care that the child looks into its book during half an hour every evening when the daily labour is concluded. Without the co-operation of parental authority I fear little will be done ; with it, there is a chance that something may ; and the parents themselves may derive some benefit, by virtuously endeavouring, according to the best of their power, to promote their childrens improvement. If the parents can read, and are duly desirous of serving their children, they may instruct them according to the method prescribed by the teacher, and the Sunday attendance may be considered as a probationary exercise or examination.

But if the child should not learn to read, it may yet learn something more valuable. It may learn the principles of religion and moral honesty. It may learn to say proper prayers, the Lord's prayer, the Creed, and the Catechism by rote and frequent repetition ; and they who know the extreme ignorance of children in the lowest rank will not deem these contemptible acquisitions.

They

They are such as may have a good effect on the whole lives of the labouring part of mankind, save them from many errors and crimes, and at the same time, conduce to promote a spirit of piety and a due degree of submissive obedience.

Christianity may certainly be understood to all the purposes of salvation without learning; and perhaps the honest labourer, who receives the plain instruction of the Sunday schoolmaster, and treasures it in his heart, and acts up to the little knowledge he possesses with firm faith and true humility, is a better Christian than the learned theologian who disputes with all the pride of syllogistic skill in the schools of divinity. Compare the child who has learned only this little to the mere vagabond, or the wretched pickpocket in London streets, who scarcely ever heard the name of God or Jesus Christ but in an oath or execration, who imbibes the arts of villainy from his cradle, and dies at the gibbet at eighteen.

Supposing children should learn nothing, in consequence of the shortness of the time devoted to instruction and the distant intervals of it, yet it is certain, that during those hours which are the most dangerous in the week they are kept from bad practices, and the contagion of bad examples. If they were not confined and under

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the master's eye, they would be in the streets, in the purlieus of the town, in the church-yard, gaming for halfpence, quarrelling, fighting, and practising every vice of which their age is capable and which opportunities allow.

Perhaps when children are industriously and soberly brought up by their parents, and employed in sedentary manufactories during the whole week, it may be injurious to health, and quite unnecessary, to confine and employ them on the day which God intended for their rest and refreshment. It is cruelty in such a case to prevent them from enjoying air and exercise.

Indeed the institution appears to me to be most properly confined to the very lowest of the people, those who are almost vagrants, and who have scarcely a friend to assist them. The children of many poor and laborious people are at their own expence sent to petty schools, and brought up as decently as can reasonably be required; and I think that to confine them on Sunday evenings, or unite them in company with the idle and vagabond, may possibly do them more injury than service.

The benefit to be derived from Sunday Schools, even to the proper object of the charity,

rity, must in every place depend greatly on the schoolmaster; and I fear the stipend usually paid is such as will not engage, after the novelty is worn off, such persons as are likely to secure attention and obedience by their wisdom or authority. Parents will not suffer a master of a degree as low as their own to punish, in an exemplary manner, or to dictate with a decisive air to their children. Great obstacles will often arise to this institution from the pride and obstinacy of parents in low life.

But the design is generous, and it may produce greater good than many apprehend. It may contribute much to preserve Christianity in its due vigour among us. It may rescue many from a wretched life, an ignominious death, and worse consequences in futurity.

Whatever doubts the cold and cautious may entertain, the sanguine zeal which its promoters display does them honour as men and Christians, and will have its reward. Whatever has so many promising appearances of being able to do great good, as the establishment of Sunday Schools, ought certainly to have a trial, and not to be rejected till the fullest experience shall have proved it ineffectual or impracticable.

The rich have so many advantages, both for enjoyment of life and the improvement of their talents, that, in gratitude for them, they ought to contribute whatever they can to the comfort and instruction of the child of poverty. Christianity teaches us to think, that the Giver of all good gifts will consider this as a grateful return to him; and experience proves, that the improvement of the poor in good morals contributes greatly to the security and accommodation of the opulent.

C H A P. VI.

Miscellaneous Literature.

I WAS reading a very impassioned copy of verses in an epigrammatist, celebrated in his time, Bernardus Bauhusius, and could not help being struck with the impropriety of its conclusion. After the tenderest exclamation it ends in a pun. The subject is *Ecce homo*, too serious an one to admit of witticism, and I believe the writer, in attempting wit upon it, complied with the taste of the times without the least intention to be unbecomingly jocular.

Ecce meus Jesus pro me, livorque, cruorque,
Et tabum, et fanies ! Ecce homo, nullus homo !
Ecce homo, qui pro me !—sed flendum est—currite,
ocelli,

In duo flumina, mî lumina, liquimini.

Ite, piæ guttæ, pallentes currite rivis

Grandibus, indomitis, tabificis lachrymis.

Quid ? nondum ulla venit ? cessatis, lumina ? saltèm

Unica—saltèm una, O guttula parva, veni.

Me miserum ! non ulla venit, non profilit ulla !

O pie Christe, quis est, quem tu *adamas* ? *adamas*.

I add a few epigrams, from the same author, for the entertainment of the classical reader. The following is on the three grand enemies of man, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

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TRES HOMINIS HOSTES.

Unum grammaticum, logicumque et rhetora vita:

Hos modò vitâris, cetera tuta tibi.

Quis rhetor?—*Mundus*;—fallax logicus?—*Cacodæmon*;

Semper declinans, est *Caro*, grammaticus.

The following is a part of an epigram on the Bed of the new-born infant Jesus, and a curious specimen of the taste of the times. The poet laments the coldness of the bed.

IN LECTULUM DULCISSIMI INFANTIS JESU
RECENS NATI.

Conde finistellam, dextellam, *Jesule*, conde.

Conde, puelle, aures, conde, puelle, caput.

Oscula, parvule, conde, labella tenerrima conde,

Hoc tege lumen et hoc, hoc tege tempus et hoc.—

O ego, mi Jesu, tuus O! si lectulus essem,

Te, te ego, vel fuso sanguine calfacerem.

Sic ego; sed contra mater: “non sanguine gaudet

“ Ille meus dulcis, melleus ille meus;

“ Poscit *aquam*”—jam nunc dabimus, dulcissime virgo,

An multam? “multam”—num gelidam?—“calidam”

Num dulcem?—“falsam:”—de flumine?—“lumine”

—fonte?

“Fronte”—Ohe satis est, jam dabo, virgo, dabo.

Who is not ready to say with the poet *Ohe satis est?*

He thus concludes an epitaph on Arias Montanus the celebrated linguist. After enumerating almost all the known languages, in which he
says

says Montanus was completely skilled, he adds well enough,

Angelicam optavit linguam quoque discere ; Christus
Audiit, angelicum sustulit inque chorum.

But the grand effort of genius, on which the poet values himself not a little, is the following. He calls it a verse making one book, and a book consisting of one verse. But I will give it and its title in the poet's own words.

“ Divæ, optimæ, maximæque matri virgini
“ Mariæ admirabilem hunc *Unius libri versum*,
“ *unius versus librum*, Christianum Proteum, tot
“ ora scilicet quot cælum sydera gerentem (verti
“ enim potest millies, bis et vicies, sensu salvo
“ et heroici carminis lege) nostri in cæli regi-
“ nam affectus monumentum hoc ponimus sem-
“ pitemum.

Tot tibi sunt dotes, virgo, quot sidera cælo.

“ In eodem hoc Proteo retrogrados versus
“ pœne centum est invenire.”

Another, which he thinks a superior effort, follows.

“ Deo optimo maximo æterno Dei filio Christo
“ Jesu mundi servatori *Proteus* e variis sacrarum
“ literarum locis depromptus, priori longe ad-
M 5 “ mirabilior,

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“ mirabilior, nam sensu salvo, et heroici carmi.
 “ nis lege, verti potest 3,628,800, scilicet tri-
 “ cies, sexies, centies, millies, vicies octies millies
 “ et octingenties.

Rex, dux, sol, lex, lux, fons, spes, pax, mons, petra,
 CHRISTUS.

What a laborious calculation for a poet !

In a florid epigram, of some length, he gives
 his *heart* to Christ, and exhorts the sons of men
 to do likewise, concluding thus :

Corda date.—O qui dat, quam sine corde sapit!

Of St. Stephen, who rejoiced while he was
 stoned, he says,

Siccinè amat lapides?—sic certè—nonne *Corona* *
 Ornari multo pulchra velit lapide.

His epigrammatic remark on the physician is
 not in a bad taste.

Res misera medicus est, cui nunquam benè est
 Nisi malè sit quam plurimis.

In his aspirations after the heavenly flame, he
 exclaims,

O amor ! O desiderium ! mea fax, meus ignis
 Cur me sic uris ? cur ?—quia tam *procul es*.

* i. e. Στεφανος.

The

The beggar's speech is striking.

De Deo loquor libenter, non libenter audio.

His hint to a sturdy beggar deserves attention.

Mosce, quid æra petis? vili quid de stipe vivis?

Alcidæ nervos, ossa Milonis habes.

Vah pudeat!—sum pauper, ais; mentire; supersunt

En bini census, dextra, sinistra, tibi.

The following, written under a *half-length* figure, contains a fine compliment.

Dimidium pinxit quæ dextera *Borromæum*

Norât quod totum pingere nemo potest.

Another good epitaph on Arias Montanus.

Hoc Syrus in tumulto est, *Hebræus*, *Graius* et *Auson*

Versus item, sed non teter et ustus, *Arabs*.

“Quinque homines,” inquis? — ne, lector, fallere;
namque

Graius, is et Latius, qui Syrus ille et Arabs,

Hebræusque, *idem* est: nempè hic est magnus *Arias*

Qui patria unus homo, quinque sed ore fuit.

The use of love and fear.

Ut fugiam scelus omne, et amem super omnia numen,

Da mihi fræna, timor, da mihi calcar, amor.

But I will add no more, lest I weary the reader whom I wish to amuse.

Pray read this

Bernardus Bauhusius, like most of the sons of Loyola, possessed learning and ingenuity, and the absurdities of his manner are to be attributed to the erroneous taste of his age. There are some kinds of false wit as entertaining from their absurdity as the true. It is the *mediocris poeta*, the middling poet, the insipid race who want sense to be right, and spirit to be wrong, whom Horace means when he says, neither gods nor men, nor the booksellers shops can tolerate them. It would be injustice to Bauhusius not to allow that he has many elegant lines and phrases, and some epigrams in the truly classical taste, with sense and beauty in the beginning and middle, and with point at the end.

I will dismiss the subject with the poet's own apology.

POETA AD MUSAM SUAM.

Serpere te momi dicunt, nimiumque jacere,
 Increpat et foccos ille vel ille tuos.
 Ne tamen hoc teneras urat tibi,—Musa, medullas,
Serpunt et violæ et dulcia fragra jacent.

C H A P. VII.

Of being pleased with Oneself.

THERE is a kind of self-complacency which arises solely from excessive self-conceit. A person under the influence of this foible imagines every thing which he says or does excellent, and every thing that belongs to him superior to the very same thing in the possession of his neighbour. According to the common adage, his geese are all swans. This quality renders a man completely ridiculous, and is indeed utterly inconsistent with good sense and the obvious suggestion of common experience.

But there is also another kind of self-complacency, which is founded on solid and virtuous principles, and is the cause of one of the most substantial satisfactions which human nature can enjoy. I mean to enumerate a few of the means which have a natural tendency to produce it.

The offices of Christian piety are attended with pleasure of a species no less durable than exalted. It was this which induced Erasmus to declare in a serious sense, that there are no greater
Epicures

Epicures than *pious Christians*. What can contribute more to pleasure than the consequence of piety, the calm serenity of reliance and resignation?

To please oneself, such is the happy constitution of things, nothing contributes more effectually than the communication of innocent pleasure to others. I say innocent pleasure; for it is the nature of guilt to add a bitter infusion to the sweetest cup of human delight.

Acts of pure Christian charity, unmixed with ostentation, leave a relish behind them which few gratifications equal or resemble. I have no doubt but that the internal sensations of a truly charitable man, after having unostentatiously relieved a person in great and urgent distress, are more pleasurable than those of the most celebrated conqueror: and I imagine the good Samaritan and Mr. Hanway enjoyed greater delight than was usually experienced by Alexander the Great, Cæsar, Charles the Twelfth, Frederick King of Prussia, or Lord Clive. The blood seems to run more smoothly in its channels after a benevolent action, so that the delight of it, while perfectly pure, may at the same time be denominated almost sensual. It is a delight also which may be recalled at will, and it affords peculiar solace under sickness and affliction.

As

As the state of man is progressive, Providence has been pleased to ordain that the steps of his improvement should be attended with complacency. Whether the improvement is moral or mental, the pleasure is great which accompanies it. A man feels himself rising in value by every new acquisition of good qualities. To be advancing more and more, by daily approaches, to attainable perfection, is a state so pleasant, that it may be said to resemble the ascent up a beautiful hill, where the prospect over variegated meadows, meandering streams, forests, distant roofs and spires, becomes at every step more delightful.

Industry in laudable pursuits is a never-failing source of internal satisfaction. It causes a pleasing succession of ideas, by bringing new objects, or a change of circumstances, continually in view. And if it is conversant with matters of importance, and attended with success, there is no state so happy as that of an industrious man in the exercise of his skill and abilities.

To have subdued an irregular or excessive passion, and to have resisted a mean, a vicious, a degrading inclination, affords a pleasing consciousness of virtuous resolution; a sensation so agreeable and flattering, as could not have been equalled by the indulgence or compliance, and
has

has this additional advantage, that it is not followed by pain, remorse, or any consequences which can occasion shame or sorrow. On the contrary, after the indulgence of vice or irregularity, a man feels himself little and low ; he despises himself, and recovers not his happiness till, by contrition or amendment, he regains a due degree of self-esteem.

No bad man, says the heathen poet, is a happy man. *Nemo malus felix*. He is perhaps forever in pursuit of enjoyment ; but he feels agitations and anxieties that detract much from his pleasures, and his reflections upon them, and their consequences to himself, his family, and many others, become, at least in the solitary hours of dejection, ill-health, or of night alone, extremely uneasy. So that it is not merely the declamation of a preacher, but the decision of experience arising from actual fact, which pronounces that a good conscience is necessary to the true enjoyment of life.

No man can have a conscience perfectly void of offence ; but whoever has violated it reluctantly, and repented as often as he has transgressed, may be said to have a good conscience ; and a treasure it is more to be desired than the treasures which are continually brought from the East, by men, whom Providence suffers to become

some enormously rich to shew that enormous riches are no decisive marks of its peculiar favour.

How sweet the slumbers of him who can lie down on his pillow and review the transactions of every day without condemning himself! A good conscience is the finest opiate. The *materia medica* cannot supply one half so efficacious and pleasant; and all the nabobs together, if they were to unite their fortunes in contribution, could not purchase a similar one.

Good health, preserved by temperance and regularity, gives a sweetness to life, a pleasantness of feeling which no civil honours or secular prosperity can bestow.

Prudential œconomy in the management of expences, and the confining them to the certain income, so as not to be incumbered with debt, or distressed by the invention of ways and means to raise supplies for the current year, exempts from ten thousand painful solitudes, and gives an ease and calmness of spirits unknown to the most opulent who possess not this caution; a caution equally required by prudence and common honesty. To see, in consequence of it, a family rising to independence, not likely to be exposed to the scorn and ill usage of the world, affords a comfort
more

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more satisfactory than the fugacious pleasures of ostentatious extravagance.

Self-esteem, founded on rational principles, is one of the first requisites to a happy life; and to the honour of virtue and religion, let it be remarked, that it is attainable only by a benevolent, a wise, a prudent conduct. Men who, by early education, by happily falling among good examples, by reading good books, and by forming good habits in consequence of all these advantages, conduct themselves in all things with reason, with moderation, and with kindness;—these are they, who, after all the pretensions of voluptuousness, enjoy the most of this world; for their happiness flows like a gentle stream uninterrupted in its course, uniform and constant, while that of others is like a torrent, which dashes from rock to rock, all foam, all noise for a little while, till it is lost in the ocean, or wasted away by its own violence. It is destructive of others, destructive of itself, and too turbulent to admit of pure tranquillity.

Let those who have wandered in pursuits which themselves are ready to acknowledge delusive and unsatisfactory, resolve, by way of experiment, to try whether the pleasure of that self-esteem which arises from rectitude of conduct, is not the most pleasing possession which

this

this world affords, whether it does not promote a constant chearfulness and gaiety of heart, which renders life a continual feast. The path of duty, comparatively speaking, is strewn with flowers and surrounded with fragrance. To the timid, the slothful, and ill-disposed, the first entrance may appear to be closed with briars; but he who has courage to break through the difficulties raised by his own imagination, will find himself in as pleasant a walk as is to be found beneath the moon. I shall not draw a deceitful picture with the colours of rhetoric. Much uneasiness and some sorrow must be the lot of every man in his present state; but I contend that the pleasantness of wisdom and virtue is not fictitious, and that he who faithfully adheres to them will, upon the whole, enjoy all the delight of which his nature and his situation render him capable.

Many philosophers maintain that selfishness is the spring of all our activity. Whether their system is well founded or not, it is certain that in pursuit of the pleasure of rational self-esteem we may be as selfish as we please without incurring the disgrace of meanness; for to the indulgence of this kind of selfishness it is necessary to cultivate every thing liberal, generous, useful, amiable. The pleasure arising from it is not unsocial, though it centres in self; for it is not to
be

be enjoyed but by promoting the good of society. The pleasure is the first reward which Providence has been pleased to assign to the honest efforts of humble virtue, a reward infinitely disproportionate to that reserved for it in a better state, but still of a pure, of a celestial nature, and great enough to excite the most ardent efforts in its acquisition.

What happiness can subsist without this essential ingredient, self-complacency? External circumstances are of no value without it. The gold loses its lustre, and the purple its glossy dye, without it. Titles, rank, power, property, the grand idols of a prostrate world, are deceitful and empty whenever the delicious tranquillity of a mind soothed to rational complacency is a stranger to the bosom.

There is this additional advantage in being pleased with oneself, on solid reasons, that it puts one in good humour with the world. All nature seems to smile with us; and our hearts, dilating with conscious virtue and benevolence, feel a new delight in the communication of complacency.

C H A P. VIII.

Of affected Sensibility ; a Lamentation over an unfortunate Animalcule.

BELINDA was always remarkably fond of pathetic novels, tragedies, and elegies. Sterne's sentimental beauties were her peculiar favourites. She had indeed contracted so great a tenderness of sensibility from such reading that she often carried the amiable weakness into common life, and would weep and sigh as if her heart was breaking at occurrences which others, by no means deficient in humanity, viewed with indifference. She could not bear the idea of killing animals for food. She detested the sports of fishing and hunting, because of their ineffable cruelty. She was ready to faint if her coachman whipt his horses when they would not draw up hill ; and she actually fell down in a fit on a gentleman's treading on her favourite cat's tail as he eagerly stooped to save her child from falling into the fire.

As she was rather of a romantic turn, she would frequently utter sentimental soliloquies on benevolence and humanity ; and when any catastrophe

strophe of a pathetic nature occurred, she generally gave vent to her feelings by writing a lamentation. I procured from one of her friends the following piece, with liberty to present it to the public eye.

Belinda, it seems, was at her toilette, adorning her tresses, when an animalcule of no great repute in the world, but who often obtrudes where he is not welcome, fell from her beautiful tresses on her neck. In the first emotions of her surprise and anger she seized the little wretch, and crushed it between her nails, till it expired with a sound

ΔΟΥΠΗΣΕΥ ΔΕ ΠΕΤΩΝ.

as Homer expresses the exit of his heroes.

The noise and the sight of the viscera soon recalled her sensibility, and she thus expressed it.

“Thou poor partaker of vitality, farewell. Life undoubtedly was sweet to thee, and I have hastily deprived thee of it. But surely the world was wide enough for thee and me. And it was ungenerous to murder one who sought an asylum under my fostering protection.

“Because thou art minute we are inclined to suppose thee insensible. But doubtless thou hadst

nerves

nerves and delicate sensations proportioned to the fineness of thy organs. Perhaps thou hadst a partner of thine affections and a numerous progeny, whom thou sawest rising to maturity with parental delight, and who are now left destitute of a protector in their helpless infancy.

“ Thy pain is indeed at an end ; but I cannot help deploring the unfeeling cruelty of those who deprive the smallest reptile, to whom nature has given breath, of that life which, though it appears contemptible in the eyes of the thoughtless, yet is sweet to the meanest animal—*was* sweet to thee, thou poor departed animalcule. Alas, that I must now say *was sweet* to thee ! Did I possess the power of resuscitation, I would re-animate thy lifeless corps, and cherish thee in the warmest corner of thy favourite dwelling-place.—But adieu forever ; for my wish is vain. Yet if thy shade is still conscious, and hovers over the head it once inhabited, pardon a hasty act of violence, which I endeavour to expiate with the tear of sympathy and the sigh of sensibility.”

Flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.

I am informed that the drawer of her writing-table is full of elegies and elegiac sonnets on rats

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and mice caught in traps, and of tom tits, and robin redbreasts, killed by school-boys. I remember to have heard a most pathetic elegy recited on the death of a redbreast, but can only recollect one pathetic *Erotefis*. "Who killed Cock "Robin?"

There is also a sublime deification of an earthworm which she once accidentally trod upon as she was endeavouring to rescue a fly from a spider in the garden. It concludes thus:

But cease to weep—no more to crawl
In the dark earth beneath yon wall,
On snow white pinions thou shalt rise,
And claim thy place in yonder skies.

Efts, toads, bats, every thing that hath life, has a claim to her tenderest compassion. And certainly her tenderness to them does her honour; but the excessive sensibility which their slightest sufferings seem to occasion, gives room to suspect that she is not without affectation. What is so singular and excessive can scarcely be natural.

Having heard and observed so much of her delicate feelings for the irrational creation, I was naturally led to make enquiries concerning her behaviour in the more interesting attachments of private life. I expected to find that—she, of course,

Like

Like the needle true,
Turned at the touch of joy or woe,
And turning, trembled too.

The following is the result of my investigation. Her temper was so various and violent that her husband was often obliged to leave his home in search of peace. I heard he had just recovered from a fit of illness, during the whole of which she had seldom visited him, and shewn no solicitude. She had sat weeping over a novel on the very day on which his fever came to a crisis, and the physicians had declared his recovery dubious. On his recovery he had gone on a voyage to the East Indies, by her advice, for the improvement of his fortune. He took leave of her very affectionately; but she was dressing to go and see Mrs. Siddons in Calista, and could not possibly spend much time in a formal parting, which was a thing she above all things detested. But, let it be remembered, she fainted away in the boxes on Mrs. Siddons's first entrance, before the actresses had uttered a syllable.

Two fine little boys were left under her care, without controul, during their father's absence. The little rogues had fine health and spirits, and would make a noise, which she could not bear, as she was busy in preparing to act a capital part in the

Orphan at a private theatre built by a man of fortune and fashion for his own amusement. She determined therefore to send the brats to school. Indeed she declared, in all companies she thought it the first of a mother's duties to take care that her children were well educated. She therefore sent them outside passengers by the stage coach to an academy in Yorkshire, where she had stipulated that they should not come home in the holidays, and indeed not till their father arrived; for she was meditating a new tragedy, under the title of the Distress'd Mother or the Widowed Wife.

Though she was not very fond of her husband, who was a plain good man, without any *fine feelings*, and was displeased with her children, whose noise interrupted her studies, yet, I took it for granted, that she who spoke so feelingly of distress, of benevolence, of humanity, of charity, and who sympathised with the poor beetle that we tread upon, could not be but profusely beneficent to all her fellow creatures in affliction who solicited her assistance; but I was here also greatly mistaken. A workman in stopping up her windows in consequence of the late commutation tax, fell from a scaffold three stories high and broke his leg. The passengers took him up, knocked at the door, and desired he might be admitted

admitted till a surgeon could be sent for; but I heard her as I passed by declaring, in a voice that might be heard from the stair-case on which she stood quite to the end of the street—"He shall not be brought here. We shall have a great deal of trouble with him. Take him to the hospital immediately; and shut the door, d'ye hear, John." The passengers, lest time should be lost, hurried the poor man to a neighbouring public house, where the honest landlord, with a pot of porter in his hand, and an unmeaning oath in his mouth, exclaimed, "Let him in?—aye, and welcome.—Here, Tom, see him laid on my own bed, and let him have every thing necessary; and if he never pays me its no great matter.—Come here's to his getting well again soon—Poor man—I warrant now he has a wife and family that must starve till he gets about again—but they shan't neither—I'll mention it to our club—They are all hearty ones, I know, and will subscribe handsomely."

The truth was, that the man had a wife and family, as my landlord conjectured, and is commonly the case. I heard that he went next morning to Belinda with a petition, drawn up very pathetically by a lawyer, who never gave any thing himself. Belinda had given orders to

the servants to say she was not at home if any body should call that week. For, indeed, she was exceedingly engaged in penning an elegy on the lap-dog who had died of a looseness; and had intended to finish her address to the Dutchess on the hardships of the labouring poor.

I was satisfied with these enquiries, and began to lose my veneration for ladies and gentlemen of exquisite sensibility, of delicate feeling, and the most refined sentiment; believing firmly, that there is more good sense and true kindness in the plain motherly housewife, who is not above her domestic duties, and in the honest man of common sense, than in the generality of pretenders to more benevolent sensations or *finer feelings* than belong to other people of equal rank, opulence, and education.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Art of Speaking, or Rhetoric, as cultivated at present.

Vir bonus, dicendi peritus.

CATO.

IT appears that many of our countrymen have risen to great honours in the state, and raised their families to nobility, by a talent of haranguing with volubility in the House of Commons or at the bar. Yet this talent is not always an indubitable mark of genius, superior judgment, or real wisdom. It has been possessed by men of superficial attainments and moderate abilities, and singular indiscretion; but it strikes, it dazzles, it carries the judgment of the hearer captive; and, from the appearance of a wonderful production without previous study, it causes an idea of genius surpassing the common standard, and approaching to inspiration.

“ Orationis ubertatem et copiam scio elo-
 “ quentiam vulgo videri, ac etiam existimari ab
 “ iis, qui si quos infinitâ quadam profluentiâ,
 “ continentique ac nunquam intermittente ser-
 “ mone *volubiles*, et canoros audiunt; eos con-
 “ tinuo disertos, eos patricio ex ordine oratores

" vocant, et vocalissimum quemque eloquentissi-
 " mum interpretantur: an vero huic verborum
 " copię tanquam corpori animus subsit, non
 " sanè sedulo considerant, aut saltèm non mag-
 " noperè desiderant; cum tamen Romanę
 " parens eloquentię nihil tam famosum existi-
 " maret, quam verborum vel optimorum, ut
 " ipse ait, et ornatissimorum sonitum inanem;
 " nullā subiecta sententiā nec scientiā. Quin-
 " etiam cum videret oratorum aliis verba, aliis,
 " rem deesse; quamvis ipse laudandam nequa-
 " quam putaret illorum infantiam, qui, quę
 " nossent, explicare dicendo nequirent; sicut
 " nec inscitiam eorum, quibus in magnā ver-
 " borum ubertate angusta res foret: tamen si
 " alterutrum esset optandum, *malle se dixit je-
 " junam illorum et indisertam prudentiam, quam
 " horum copiosam et stultam loquacitatem.*" Fa-
 " miani Stradę Prolus. lib. ii. Prolus. i. p. 125.
 Edit. Oxon.

As public garrulity answers the temporary pur-
 poses of interest and ambition, it is not to be won-
 dered that it should be valued highly, and pursued
 with the keenest avidity. I know of no accomplish-
 ment so eagerly desired in the present age as that of
 oratory. "See," says the anxious parent, "what
 " such a lawyer and such a statesman has effected for
 " himself

" himself and family. He has enriched and en-
 " nobled it solely by his eloquence. As to law,
 " he knew little of it. As to business he was a
 " child in it; but he could talk like an angel,
 " and you see how he is rewarded. Therefore,
 " my dear boy, attend lecturers on the art, attend
 " the theatre, read aloud, speak in public when-
 " ever you have an opportunity, and omit no-
 " thing which can make you an orator."

Mr. Sheridan, the father of the statesman,
 who does his father so much honour, is, with
 some reason, quite an enthusiast in recommend-
 ing to the youth of the nation the study of ora-
 tory. According to him, it is the one thing
 needful, the salvation of the nation, as every
 thing laudable and great depends upon it. I
 respect his zeal in the cause, though I do not
 judge it necessary, as there appears to be no
 deficiency of speakers in either House, or at the
 Tribunal; and the rewards which have been
 lavished on speakers will not fail to preserve a
 due attention to this accomplishment. Greater
 merit in more useful exertions has not equal re-
 ward, because it is not so ostentatious, nor so in-
 telligible to the vulgar.

There is certainly a kind of oratory which
 constitutes one of the noblest productions of hu-

man genius. Such was that of Demosthenes, and such that of Cicero in most of his orations, but not in all, for he sometimes descended to the character of a mere advocate. But there is another of a very subordinate kind, which consists in little more than mere volubility and declamation, exerted for purposes of faction, avarice, and ambition, with but few restrictions of conscience, rules of equity, and truth, or conclusions of reason.

I am afraid much of that modern eloquence which we hear so greatly applauded is of the mean and mercenary kind; and I am led to think so, from observing that many of the most celebrated orators have confessedly affirmed things in the senate when it was agreeable to their interest or party views, and denied them again when their interest or regard to their party prompted them; affirmed things with the utmost vehemence, and the most unlimited confidence of assertion, which proved to have no foundation; and which, there is reason to think, the very orators themselves did not, at the very time they poured out the torrent of their eloquence upon them, firmly believe. But they were esteemed *able men for their party*, and employed to harangue for them, because they were known to exert themselves in this way without one restraint from conscience.

conscience. Their tongues were used as sharp swords to fight at the head of their followers for the spoils of victory; and the weapon has usually been not only pointed and venomous, but two-edged.

At the bar no villain need despair. He may purchase, for a few guineas, an advocate famous for his eloquence, who, by dint of unparalleled audacity, loudness of voice, rapidity of utterance, sophistry of reasoning, shall confound the honest witnesses into self-contradiction, frighten the poor jurymen, and menace the judge into partiality for his iniquitous client. If he should succeed, against every one's expectation, his fortune is made. Riches flow in and add to his insolence. And now he stands forth an orator, a formidable orator, at the very found of whose voice truth and modesty retire in silence, and bemoan their injuries unredressed.

It was this abuse of eloquence, this babbling garrulity in defence of any cause, without regard to good, and just, and honourable principles, which induced Socrates, or rather Plato in his name, to enumerate rhetoric among the *turpes artes*, the arts that disgraced their professors and practitioners.

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Gorgias Leontinus, a name celebrated by antiquity, was in many respects like the modern mercenary orator. He undertook to speak in favour of any cause for pay, and on any art, or on any subject, better than those who, from profession and education, might be supposed best to understand it. And he would indeed speak more *plausibly* than they; in finer language, rounder periods, with a greater flow, with emphasis and gesture; he deceived the vulgar, he gained his point; and a modern Englishman with his abilities would have reached an earldom. But when his speeches were brought to the touchstone of reason and truth, they appeared vile; all counterfeited, with a glossy varnish, but without an atom of intrinsic value. Bring the most celebrated speeches of some patriots to the same touchstone, and decide on their worth impartially, and then it will appear whether a knack of speaking is the first merit in a state, and whether it ought to be rewarded with civil honours in preference to prudence in action, and in council, to activity in public business, benevolence in great designs, foresight in precaution, and many lovely virtues of the heart, and useful powers of the understanding, which make no noise, and despise all splendour.

Great

Great talkers in private life are not supposed to be great thinkers. Women and children are said to be particularly loquacious. By analogy it may at least be *surmised*, that the greatest speakers in public life are not always the wisest men, and historical facts seem to justify the supposition.

But false oratory, though it serve the purposes of the orator, is often highly injurious to the public, by misleading the judgment, and placing obstacles in the way of right and beneficial conduct. It ought therefore to be discouraged; and the public should beware of bestowing that fame and those honours on the power of speaking with force and volubility, which are due only to that real wisdom, which is usually reserved, and which says but little, though that little is always to the purpose.

“ But” (says a man of the world very truly) “ men must raise themselves by *dazzling* exertions. Culprits when accused must be defended by somebody; he who can do it most successfully *by any means* will be employed, will be enriched, and, perhaps, if he carries his talent from the bar to the senate, ennobled. This is the natural effect of things where interest and ambition are the

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“ first objects ; so keep your ideas of imaginary
 “ excellence for the land of Utopia.”

I hear in silence and take my leave, referring
 the venal defenders of things in their present
 state, however corrupted, to the contemptible
 orators in the school of Gorgias Leontinus.

“ Fuisse hæc olim quemadmodum juncta na-
 “ tura, sic officio quoque copulata, ut iidem
 “ *sapientes atque eloquentes* haberentur: scidisse
 “ deinde se studium, atque inertiam factum esse,
 “ ut artes esse plures viderentur ; nam ut pri-
 “ mum *lingua esse cœperit in quæstu*, institutumque
 “ eloquentiæ bonis malè uti, curam morum eos
 “ qui disertis habite sint, reliquisse ; eam vero
 “ destitutam infirmioribus ingeniis veluti prædæ
 “ fuisse.”

QUINTILIAN.

C H A P. X.

Of the dull Style.

WRITERS of strong intellect are often without imagination and sentiment, and consequently dull. They syllogize admirably ; but they cannot impress ideas with force, they cannot paint images with the pencil of fancy in the shape and colours of nature. They know not how to use the figure which the ancients called *Enargeia*, and which consisted in representing the action or fact related in so lively a manner as to render the reader a spectator *. Their books are therefore approved ; and then laid up on the shelf, where they continue in very good condition for sale, whenever it shall be their lot to be placed in a bookseller's catalogue. The dull style is an excellent preservative of books, as far as the binding and paper are concerned.

Metaphysical writers have greatly countenanced the dull style. Their topics are of such a nature as scarcely to admit of vivacity. Yet they are voluminous. They have no pity on

* Την ἀκον οὖν ποιεῖ,

their

their readers, who, if they mean to be acquainted with the recondite authors, are obliged to toil with a pick-axe through tomes of dulness, with as much darkness around them, and labour in their progress, as if they were at work in the lead-mines. I wonder that there should be many such writers; but I wonder more that they should have any readers, except those invalids who labour under the want of sleep, and who find such pages wonderfully efficacious in promoting gentle slumbers.

There are many large works with pompous and specious titles which may be said to be written upon NOTHING, consisting of mere speculation and fanciful reasoning, which, while it pretends to argument and solidity, is more airy and visionary than the romance of *Cassandra*. It would be easy to enumerate many works metaphysical, theological, sceptical, philosophical, and political, which are mere cobwebs, spun from the brain of inexperienced and unlearned speculatists, taking up much time in the reading, puzzling, confounding every thing they touch upon, and leading to no valuable conclusion. Their novelty, and the fame they sometimes acquire by the appearance of profound knowledge and wonderful refinement, has procured them readers, and introduced a taste for, or at least a patient attention

attention to, dull thought in languid language.

Sceptical writers and abusers of Christianity are often men of disputatious tempers with little sentiment and fancy, and consequently their works are, with few exceptions, very soporific. Even Lord Bolingbroke, a lively writer on other occasions, displays in his philosophical writings a style and manner of writing which may be called a mere lullaby. Hume's metaphysics are also worthy to be offered up at the shrine of Morpheus, unless Vulcan should make a prior claim to them.

Few, I think, would wade through the dull and dry speculations of infidels and airy metaphysicians, if they were not supported in their progress by self-flattery. They please themselves with the fancied consciousness of great depth, subtlety, and acuteness; and are also not unwilling to be considered by those who know what they read, as very profound thinkers; men above the level of vulgar prejudice, free from the shackles of education, sitting like gods in the skies, and beholding other poor mortals blindly wandering in the regions below them. A little cloudiness, and even darkness, contributes to augment the dignity of writer and reader.

It

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It seems probable, *a priori*, that men who write against religion should be dull; for men of great sensibility feel devotion very forcibly. Their love, their gratitude, their hopes and their fears, are all powerfully influenced by religious ideas. But the frigid philosopher allows nothing to sensations of which he is not conscious, but, at the same time, would bring every thing to the tribunal of his own reason, which he considers as infallible.

The taste for systematical writings, where every thing is forced to bend to an hypothesis formed in the writer's mind, contributes much to the prevalence of dulness. For systematizers indulge nothing to fancy, and admit no colours of rhetoric, but satisfy themselves with fabricating a chain of dry argument to lead up to the first link or spring, which they have forged by the *fiat* of their own authority. Men of geometrical and logical genius may be pleased with an ingenious system founded on the sand, but it will have few charms, and produce no effect with the world at large. It is a pretty curiosity, and is to be laid up like shells and mosses in the cabinets of the curious, for the inspection of the virtuosi.

The learned and philosophical are a small number in comparison of the rest of mankind,
and,

and, as they are already cultivated and refined in a great degree, want not the improvements derived from publications so much as the busy tribe employed in useful and honourable action in the living world. To address metaphysical works to them (though they might relish them) is, comparatively speaking, unnecessary; and, we may rest assured, that they will not be read by the men of business, unless by a few, who wish to appear deeper than their neighbours.

Of what kind are the works which have become the favourites of an admiring world, such as Homer, Virgil, Milton, Shakespeare? Homer is all life. He throws his narrative into a dramatic form, on purpose to give it an air of vivacity. A man who reads and tastes Homer will not only be constantly awake and anxiously attentive, but elevated, fired, enraptured. Virgil, Milton, and Shakespeare, are not quite so lively as their great model, but they are next to him in that quality, nor after a very long interval. Vivacity, spirit, fire, are the ingredients which embalm writers for eternity.

An affectation of great delicacy, softness, and gentleness, contributes much to dulness. An even, smooth, unvaried style, though it may be commended by the critics, and pronounced faultless, will

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will yet infallibly cause the reader to stretch out his arms and yawn.

General terms, instead of particular, idle epithets, long and ill turned periods, are in their nature dull.

A flow crawling style, jogging on like a broad wheeled waggon, though it should be richly laden with sense, will not tempt many to accompany it for pleasure, who are able to enjoy the rapidity of a post-chaise and four.

The anticipation of matter by a previous declaration of your method, as is frequently done in sermons, renders the whole languid and flat. Divisions and subdivisions of the subject, which appear in sermons, have a powerful effect in realizing Hogarth's sleeping congregation.

In a word, whatever solicits attention without repaying it by striking facts, beautiful language, lively imagery, and the splendour which genius, like the sun, diffuses over all it shines upon, must be irksome, and, because it is irksome, will in time be neglected, and therefore entirely cease to produce the effect which the writer intended.

Bad

Bad writers, as well as good, must abound in a country where the press is open, and a thousand motives besides genius, impel men to employ it.

Manufactures are, however, served and promoted by the making of books; otherwise, at least half that have appeared might as well have been suppressed; I mean not those which are calculated to do harm, but those which can do neither harm nor good, from their intolerable dulness and insipidity.

But I must refrain. Perhaps I am advancing opinions which may weigh against my Winter Evenings. I believe I had better say no more, but leave the gentle reader to stretch himself after this narcotic. Already, perhaps, he will be tempted to say, that he finds I not only know the theory of dulness, but also the practice.

C H A P. XI.

Of some Circumstances relating to conjugal Felicity.

I PRESENT my reader with the following letters, which describe a situation in private life.

My dear Husband,

I WRITE not to upbraid you. I entertain a sincere affection for you, and no unkind usage shall ever remove it. I write only to let you know the state of those whom you have unfortunately abandoned, your children and your wife.

Fame has informed me, with too much authenticity, that you have found another object of your love, and that I shall see your face no more. I who had expected your return from the East Indies with painful anxiety, who had counted the flow hours which parted you from me,—think how I was shocked at hearing you would come to England no more, and that you had settled with a mistress in the South of France. It was for your sake that I lamented. You went against my earnest entreaties; but it was with a desire, which I thought sincere, to provide a genteel maintenance for our four little ones, whom
you

you said you could not bear to see brought up to the evils of poverty. I might now lament the disappointment in not sharing the expected riches which I hear you have amassed. But I scorn it. What are riches compared to the delight of sincere affection! I deplore the loss of your love; I deplore the frailty which has involved you in error, and will, I am sure, as such mistaken conduct must, terminate in misery.

But I mean not to remonstrate. It is, alas! too late. I only write to you to acquaint you with the health and some other circumstances of myself and those little ones whom you once loved.

The large house in which you left us in Harley-street could not be supported without an expence which the little sum you left behind could not long supply. I have relinquished it, and retired to a neat little cottage in a village fifty miles from London. We can make no pretensions to elegance; but we live in great neatness, and, by strict œconomy, supply our moderate wants with as much comfort as our desolate situation will allow. Your presence, my love, would make the little cottage a palace.

Poor Emily, who is grown a fine girl, has been working a pair of ruffles for you, and as
she

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she sits by my side, often repeats with a sigh, When will my dear papa return? The others are constantly asking me the same question; and little Henry, as soon as he began to talk, learned to hiss, in the first syllables he ever uttered, When will papa come home?

Sweet fellow! He is now sitting on his stool by my side, and as he sees me drop a tear, asks me why I cry, for papa will come home soon. He and his two brothers are frequently riding on your walking-cane, and take particular delight in it, because it is papa's.

I do assure you I never open my lips to them on the cause of your absence. But I cannot prevail with myself to bid them cease to ask when you will return, though the question frequently extorts a tear (which I hide in a smile), and wrings my soul, while I suffer in silence.

I have taught them to mention you with the greatest ardour of affection in their morning and evening prayers; and they always add of themselves a petition for your speedy return.

I spend my time in giving them the little instruction I am able. I cannot afford to place them at any eminent school, and do not chuse
that

that they should acquire meanness and vulgarity at a low one. I hope you will approve my teaching Emily and the two elder boys the French language. They have already made a tolerable proficiency in it. As to English, they read alternately three hours every morning the most celebrated poets and prose writers, and they can write, though not an elegant, yet a very plain and legible hand.

Do not, my dear, imagine that the employment is irksome. It affords me a sweet consolation in your absence. Indeed, if it were not for the little ones, I am afraid I should not support it.

I think it will be a satisfaction to you to hear that, by retrenching our wants and expences, we are enabled to pay for every thing we buy; and, though poor, are not unhappy from the want of any necessary.

Pardon my interrupting you. I mean to give you satisfaction. Though I am deeply injured by your error, I am not resentful. I wish you all the happiness you are capable of, and am your once loved, and still affectionate,

EMILIA.

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After an interval of three years, the following answer was returned :

Excellent EMILIA,

By the time you receive this, the hand which wrote it will be laid in the grave. I have ordered it not to be transmitted to you, till I am departed ; and I am now on my death-bed. My physician has told me, in delicate terms, that I cannot recover.

Avarice led me to separate from you ; a separation of a year or two caused me, weak as I was, to forget you, and to form a connection, from which I have derived nothing but torment. I deserved it by my folly and my wickedness. You were the best of women, and I have wronged you beyond the power of reparation.

I will not give you pain by a particular enumeration of my various miseries. I have been infatuated by one who loved me not, but loved the treasure I rapidly amassed in the East, and left no effort untried to captivate my affections. She contrived to come home in the same ship, where our acquaintance encreased to an intimacy, which has laid the foundation of all my distress. But, could you believe it ? After having spent in dissipation and in gaming almost the whole of

my fortune, she left me, not without involving me in a fatal duel, and accompanied the man who gave me my death's wound. The following letter I enclose, that you may have the satisfaction to see how different a woman she was from yourself.

Despicable wretch,

Do you think I will live in beggary with you? Refuse to buy me the diamond necklace! Captain ——— is a generous man. He has long expressed a regard for me. He has bought the necklace which you, mean fellow, refused. Make no more pretensions to me; and if you dare be angry with the Captain for any liberties he may take, be assured you will meet with your match: and I hope to hear that he makes you repent your insolence when you aspired to the affections of one who is deserving of a man of spirit, and ———

Your's no more.

Till I received this I never thought of your letter. Indeed, as I knew your hand, I never opened it; for it reached me when I was intoxicated with newly acquired opulence, and a variety of vicious gratifications.

It has indeed afforded me satisfaction, as you kindly intended it, to find that my poor children

have such a mother to compensate the injuries of a deluded father.

The wound inflicted by my antagonist, who is also a married man, is in a vital part; and there is not, as I have told you, the least hope of recovery. I can scarcely wish it, unless it were to repent of my transgressions; for I should be ashamed to see my injured Emilia, and the presence of the little ones would break my heart. I have had time to make a will; and the sum which I have left, though little in comparison with what I acquired abroad, will, I confide, under your care, supply a decent competency.

Forgive me, my dear wife, forgive me, my dear children, and remember that the father who cruelly deserted you lived a wretch in consequence of his unkindness, and died prematurely. It was the last satisfaction he had that he lived to see his error, and to ask God and his family forgiveness. Farewell; and may you and your dear children avoid the misery by avoiding the wickedness of your husband,

The silent grief of the amiable Emilia can easily be conceived. But her own heart and her children consoled her. She had brought up her children

children virtuously, and furnished them with useful knowledge to the best of her power; and they repaid her by gratitude and good conduct. The addition to their very little fortune was opulence to those who had not expected it.

When time had mitigated her grief, I have often heard her in conversation lament the situations which cause married persons to separate at a great distance, and for a long time, which, in some minds, are apt to erase the traces of affection; and she has spoken with warmth against that avarice which drives people who have a competency, and might reasonably be contented at home, to foreign climes in pursuit of enormous wealth, which Providence, as a punishment for avarice, frequently renders the occasion of misery.

C H A P. XII.

Of the present State of Theatrical Amusements.

REAL life affords not at all times sufficient objects to employ the active faculties of man. Truth, matter of fact, and necessary business, soon cease to wear the grace of novelty. Fiction is therefore called in as an auxiliary to fact, and becomes highly useful in affording recreation. Hence romances and novels ; hence also the drama and all the scenic representations of the theatre.

The taste for theatric spectacles is universal. It is found in the most polished ages of antiquity, and in the rudest nations of modern discovery. It is seen to prevail in Greece and Rome, and in the Isles of the Southern Ocean. It is seen not only in London and Paris, but at Otaheite.

The Athenians were attached to public spectacles with an ardour which caused them to forget their public duty. They expended on the theatre the money which should have supported a formidable military power. Demosthenes employs a great part of his most celebrated orations in endeavouring to convince them of the danger of their infatuation.

tuation. He is obliged to touch the subject with great delicacy and timidity; for they would scarcely hear any thing said against their favourite foible, even when their political existence depended on its removal. It would at one time have given them far less uneasiness to hear that an army was defeated, than that the diversions of the theatre were prohibited. Every Athenian received, it appears, two *oboli per diem* from the treasury, which they called *theatre money*.

The demagogue Eubulus, to pay his court to the people, caused a law to be enacted, prohibiting, on pain of death, the making of a motion to restore the fund, which had been alienated in time of peace for the theatrical expences, to its original purpose the military service, or the use of the public on any emergency. The law was afterwards repealed through urgent necessity.

Fond as Englishmen are of their theatres, I believe there is not a true Briton among them who would not cheerfully consent to shut up every place of public amusement rather than be conquered by an insidious neighbour and tyrant like Philip of Macedon; and let it be remembered, that Athenian liberty did not long subsist after the prevalence of this excessive attachment

to the theatre. When men value the amusement of a sight more than their liberty, it is not to be wondered if their liberty soon falls a sacrifice to the corrupt artifices of some enterprising politician.

The Romans were scarcely less attached to public spectacles. In their decline they found a consolation for the loss of liberty in the diversions of the theatres and Circus.

—————*Duas tantum res anxius optat*
Panem et Circenses.————— Juv.

They have no anxiety, says the satirist, speaking of the Romans in their degenerate state, but for the largesses of their patrons and the public amusements.

Our English theatres have been cultivated during the last century with singular care; and the histrionic art carried to high perfection; and in the present age there appears to be no deficiency.

The days of Garrick were, however, the days of theatrical glory. He was undoubtedly accomplished in the art which he professed; but he had also another art, that of drawing attention to the theatres, by rendering them and their concerns

concerns the fashionable topics of conversation. He wisely devoted himself to one principal object, the illustration of Shakespeare's beauties; and, perhaps, carried the applause of that great poet higher than he would otherwise have done, for the sake of raising himself at the same time. People were anxious to hear the best poet recited by the best actor; and I believe both he, his friends, and those who were interested in the success of the theatre, did not suffer any of his excellences to pass without their due share of newspaper praise.

Similar arts have been practised since his final exit; but they were not supported by his merit, and they have been carried to an extreme, which has frustrated its own purpose.

Puffing, for such is the technical term, seems to be relied on as the grand column on which the whole theatrical fabric is to stand. But it is used in such excess that just praise loses its effect by it.

Party prejudice, overbearing influence, connexions with great people, these carry off with applause the dull poem of the dramatist, and the mediocrity of actresses and actors. But where, in the mean time, shall modest merit find a friend?

In the public certainly. But the pit is by no means the arbiter at present, whatever might be the case in the days of the trunk-maker. According to some previous determination of party or prejudice, a player or play is to be admitted or exploded, and the pit, box, and galleries, join in confirming the sentence with as little exercise of judgment as of candour.

The newspapers decide on dramatic merit with absolute authority. Those who sit in the pit, where the critics were said to fix their seat, come with minds already prepossessed either for or against the poem or the actor, by the criticisms of a newspaper. A few may have sense and spirit to judge for themselves, but the majority are led by the arbitrary decision of some anonymous or interested detractor or encomiast.

Interest and corruption reign in the political world with little controul. We are so used to their prevalence, that, though we lament it, we are no longer surpris'd at it. But it is with astonishment we see it find its way into the republic of letters. Upon consideration the wonder diminishes. The artful and avaricious have discovered that fame, in the theatric walk, whether of a writer or a reciter, is money. And therefore men employ themselves to extol or de-
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cry just on the same principles, and much in the same manner, as the Bulls and Bears in Exchange Alley.

But, in the progress of corruption, are we to become a nation of swindlers? Are the liberal and elegant Nine to be corrupted by the general contagion? Forbid it, taste and genius; forbid it, Spirit of England.

Yes, says the artful puffer, forbid it as you please, there will be smuggling of theatrical and all other fame so long as the pence are to be gained by it.

Romæ omnia venalia.

It is an old complaint; and I fear there is no remedy for it but patience.

C H A P. XIII.

On the Practice of attributing all religious Principles and Actions to Superstition.

In superstitione inest timor INANIS Deorum.

CIC. de Natur. Deor.

SUCH is the imperfection of language, that words cannot be found to discriminate all the variety of ideas of the human mind with that degree of precision which is necessary to avoid error. A great many mistakes in morals arise from the abuse of words, which are too often either voluntarily or malevolently misunderstood and misapplied. The Christian religion has always suffered by this perversion. It suffers at this time, since it is denominated by those who impiously endeavour to injure its cause, a mode of superstition. Though man boasts much of his reason, it is really astonishing to consider how few exercise it with effect. Give any thing a bad name, and the majority of mankind will abominate it without examination, merely in consequence of the first impresson which they hastily received from a misapplied appellation.

The freethinkers of this age, who dignify themselves with the name of liberal philosophers,
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are remarkably inclined to stigmatize our religion with the name of superstition. They who wish to be esteemed men of liberal minds, and who abhor the ridicule and censure which attends the bigot, are but too ready to join with the pretended philosophers in exploding religion. To avoid the epithet of superstitious, which conveys to them the idea of weakness, they are rash and precipitate enough to reject all the comfortable offers which religion reaches out to her sincere votaries. The very name frightens them; and if they resolve not to fear God, it is very certain that they are sadly afraid of man. They dare the vengeance of Omnipotence; but they cannot stand against the ridicule of a minute philosopher and a pert witling.

He must know little of the history of mankind who shall deny that superstition has prevailed in all ages and all nations, and caused much cruelty and misery. Man has a natural tendency to superstition. Feeling himself weak and miserable, he is ready to fly to any thing which his fancy suggests to him as a refuge in his distress. A stock or a stone becomes the object of his adoration. He is ready to inflict on himself the most excruciating torments, or to suffer them from others, if he is once persuaded that he can thus appease an angry Deity. Na-

tural affection dies at the command of superstition. A child is sacrificed with alacrity, if the devotee is taught that with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Every thing yields to the devout phrenzy. That every philanthropist should therefore endeavour to prevent its diffusion among mankind, is to be expected and applauded. But let him not, through carelessness or violence, root up a salutary plant in his endeavour to eradicate a weed. Religion is the medicine of human life, as superstition is its bane.

In this enlightened age there is little danger of gross superstition. The darkness of ignorance was necessary to give to the bugbears of imagination the appearance of reality. Opinions are examined in this country with that freedom which our happy constitution allows, and that perspicacity which a multitude of well-informed understandings must reasonably be supposed to possess. The national religion is therefore professed in all its native purity, and they who presume to call it superstition, only prove their own wickedness and vanity.

Such vanity must be wicked, though at the same time it owes much of its origin to folly. Weak minds often seek nothing farther
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than the applause of their company. They appear wonderfully wise in their own eyes, if they can astonish their neighbours by the singularity or the boldness of their opinions. Such men are to be known, whenever a religious idea is introduced, by a significant sneer of contempt, or an uplifting of the eye-brows with an air of conscious superiority. If the language of grimace is not sufficiently understood, they think it necessary to suggest a hint, "that they look upon
 " all such superstitious stuff as unworthy men of
 " sense," (by which they mean to characterise themselves), "and fit only to scare children and
 " old women. For their own parts, they must
 " congratulate themselves that they have eman-
 " cipated themselves from the horrid slavery of
 " prejudice."

Nevertheless it would appear, on a fair examination, that these arrogant talkers are only half learned, and that pride fills up the mighty void of sense; yet such is the confidence with which they speak, that the young and the weak are often seduced by them, and become their disciples. Thus their sect is increased in numbers, and their arrogance increases in a much greater proportion.

They teach their disciples that religion owes its rise to subtle politicians, and its support to

the arts of priestcraft. That religion has been hypocritically abused by statesmen and ecclesiastics to serve the purposes of avarice and ambition, is at once a melancholy and an undeniable truth. But will cavillers never desist from arguing against the use of a thing from its abuse, a fallacy unworthy a man of common understanding or common honesty? I reprobate those politicians and those priests who have attempted to avail themselves of religion as an artifice to promote their secular designs. They are more detestable than the open and declared unbeliever. If he is honest, he is an object of compassion rather than contempt; but those artful politicians, who think to drive men to slavery, or obedience, as they call it, by frightening them with the phantoms of a religion which they do not themselves believe, deserve the vengeance of society. It will be said, that they mean to preserve good order by promoting superstition. I cannot call that good order which is preserved only by the deceit and hypocrisy of the rulers. Good order requires that men capable of so mean a deceit should not be the governing part of society. Their very pre-eminence disturbs good order. The only good order which they can wish to promote is, that tame acquiescence among the lower ranks, which allows themselves to lord it over a subject world.

It is very true that religion contributes to secure a peaceable acquiescence in good government. This is one among its many beneficent effects ; but it is not true that religion is only the invention of politicians, and a mere state engine to effect tranquillity. It originates in the human mind from the spontaneous feelings of nature. In the most unenlightened countries, where no pretensions were ever made to revelation, traces of it are to be found. Nothing but ignorance united with depravity can deny the foundations of natural religion. Every good mind admitting natural religion by the light of natural understanding, will rejoice to find so many proofs of the Christian revelation.

To fear God is the best method of acquiring that true courage which fears nothing else. The fear of God arises not from a timorous and weak mind, as the infidel pretenders to philosophy represent it. I appeal to facts in the history of mankind. Have not the bravest and best men in all ages and nations displayed a reverential awe of God ? If only the weak had patronized religion, it would long ago have been exploded. The examples and arguments of the best and wisest of mankind have operated, under the direction of Providence, in continuing among mankind that source of all true comfort, a due sense
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of religion. The vain and the wicked have endeavoured to destroy it, and they have always succeeded with a few ; but they have not been able to prevail universally ; neither will they ; for it is founded on the rock of truth, and the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

I am sorry to observe the philosophy of Epicurus gaining ground in our country. It might be called the philosophy of Satan. It is destructive of every thing virtuous and good, and equally portends the ruin of empires and of human nature. It flatters human depravity so much, that nothing can impede its progress but the counteracting prevalence of Christian principles and practices.

I seriously exhort all, therefore, who are Christians indeed, to dare to profess what they believe, and to discountenance error by the native fortitude of truth. The misfortune is, that the modest Christian is too often restrained by his love of peace, and by his humility, from standing up in the defence of the Gospel ; while the patrons of error, incited by vanity, and a malignant desire of rendering others as wicked and miserable as themselves, are indefatigable in the diffusion of their opinions. It becomes the duty of the sincere Christian to exert himself, when unbelievers

lievers multiply, and the scorner from his chair declares the Christian religion, like all other religions, to be only "*a mode of superstition.*"

On the Machiavellian principle of using religion as an engine of state, let me ask the pretended philosophers, how the most important transactions of civil life, and how the business of courts of judicature can proceed, when they shall have succeeded in diffusing the doctrine that Christianity is but an artful delusion to enthrall the vulgar? Will an oath be then of any force or obligation? These philosophers are more injurious to the interests of society than many malefactors who are by the laws of their country capitally convicted. They destroy the very root of all civil and moral virtue. They are teachers of vice, not of timid and reluctant vice, but of vice which dares the broadest day-light, and boldly defends itself on avowed principle.

I will conclude with adding one suggestion, which, though it may not find universal approbation, will, I think, deserve it. I am persuaded that a good man ought to be cautious of expressing himself with scorn and contempt even on the subject of those many false religions which prevail in the world, and which may justly deserve the name of superstition; for it appears to me,

me, that God Almighty, as a benevolent Being, must always be pleased with intentional service and obedience, though the mode of performing it is erroneous. At least, I believe it will admit no doubt, that God will be better pleased with the zeal of the most superstitious than with the impiety and presumption of the unbelieving philosopher, who proudly imagines his own reason to be the standard of all truth and propriety.

These unhappy dupes of pride will, I dare say, at some future day, find their error refuted, if not by argument, yet by the slow punishments of an avenging God. For great and terrible is the Lord God omnipotent. Who may abide his wrath? If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Blessed indeed are they who throughout life have served their God with devotion and humility. God shall make all their bed in their sickness. Life to them shall be pleasant, as a journey through a delightful country, warmed and enlightened by the sun; and death shall be to them disarmed of his terrors; so that both in life and at death they shall experience the truth of that declaration, which teaches us, that *the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.*

C H A P. XIV.

*Of the Folly of suffering the Judgment to be seduced
by Wit, in Things of Moment.*

TO be remarkable for that lively and creative power of the mind which invents such ideas as are both pleasing and surprising, by their truth and novelty, is a distinction greatly to be valued. It is to possess a power of diffusing a charm on every subject, and of striking conviction in the mind with an instantaneous impulse. There is no doubt but that the Giver of every good gift intended that it should be productive of beneficial effects. It is certainly conducive to cheerfulness, and enlivens the dull identity of common life. It ridicules folly; and, by ridiculing, frequently corrects it. It often decides with momentary intuition on subjects which plodding industry has laboured only to augment the obscurity. None, I believe, will indulge a general invective against wit but those who are destitute of it.

Wit has sometimes been used as an auxiliary to reason in the defence of religion. Dr. South possessed a share of abilities which were sufficient to brandish any weapon which he chose to employ.

ploy. Wit in his hand was sharp and irresistible, and made its way like the scymitar or the battle-axe. He was one of the ablest champions of the church. He is not only a wit but a solid reasoner. His learning is equal to his natural endowments. Wit enlivens the mass of his erudition, as the leaven leaveneth the farinaeous substance. Dr. South exerted his wit to so good purposes, and with so much effect, that he is most deservedly placed in a high rank among the many excellent preachers who have adorned this country. A sincere admirer of him cannot but wish that he had not deformed his writings with some expressions which, though not destitute of humour, must be condemned as vulgarisms.

Dr. Horne, the present Dean of Canterbury, who has discovered a genuine spirit of piety in his writings, and displayed the beauty of holiness in all its charms, has attacked the philosophy of Hume with the arms of ridicule. Indeed many parts of Hume's philosophy appear to carry with them their own refutation by inherent absurdity; but they fall into the hands of those whose want of learning and of principles induces them to admit the arguments of sophistry in defence of libertinism. Dr. Horne justly supposed that the admirers of Hume were more likely to be disabused of their error by the fear of derision, than
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by any force of argumentation. He has indeed derided both Hume and the Humists, as they affect to style themselves, with singular success. I only wish that the part of his book in which they are attacked could be universally introduced to their notice. It would operate as an antidote to his poison, unless indeed its genuine effect should be prevented by the force of established prejudice.

The latter part of Dr. Horne's letters upon infidelity I should not have regretted, if it had been entirely omitted. It owes its origin to an obscure pamphlet, which would never have emerged to notice by its proper power: and the difficulties of many passages in Scripture are by no means removed by the remarks of the pious Dean, however ingenious and well-intended.

After all, it must be owned, that great caution is required in the use of wit and humour as auxiliary to the cause of religion. They induce a levity of mind, which is too apt to degenerate to a wanton disregard of every thing serious. Religion, like a chaste matron, should appear in a dress which excites sentiments of respect, and forbids familiarity. When she is introduced to mankind in a grotesque or gay attire, she ought to be under the direction of a guide who can teach

teach her to preserve an air of dignity in the midst of her condescension: I mean to suggest that wit and humour, like that which is applied by Dr. Horne, should never be used in religious subjects but by writers whose judgment is superior to their comic abilities, and whose comic abilities would, like Yorick's, set the table in a roar.

Wit and humour have indeed been much more frequently employed as the enemies than as the auxiliaries of Christianity. The natural man, as he is styled in the Holy Scriptures, that is, the man who is unregenerated by grace, and but little read in theological learning, will find a multitude of particulars which, with but a small share of ingenuity, he may perversely turn to ridicule. To be facetious on sacred subjects requires more malignity than wit.

That Voltaire had wit, none can deny but those who are destitute of it. In subjects of polite literature his wit is always delightful, though his judgment is said to be not always sound; but on subjects which concern things sacred, both his wit and his judgment deserve reprobation. Here his wit is always misapplied, as well as often false.

But, allowing for the sake of argument, that the wit of Voltaire in sacred subjects is pure and
 excellent,

excellent, yet every man of sense and seriousness will arm himself with caution before he ventures to give it his attention. A man has so much to gain or to lose by his religion, that he will not rashly incur the danger of losing all belief in it. He recollects that the sparks of wit are often like the fire of a nocturnal vapour, which shines only to seduce, or like some stones fabricated by art in imitation of nature, at once brilliant and false.

Reason only, or the powerful impulses of conscience, can influence a man of sense in affairs of religion. Convince me, if you can, he will say, that my religion is ill-founded, and I will relinquish it. But wit is not able to convince. Its province is to amuse the fancy, and not to persuade the faculty of reason.

It may be rather difficult to avoid delusion when it appears under so pleasing a form as that of wit ; but, as religion is confessedly of infinite consequence to our happiness, let us always prove the solidity of the witty sentiment by the touchstone of reason. An impartial application of that test will, I am convinced, become always favourable in the result to the cause of Christianity. If we are led by curiosity to read the works of celebrated wits who have taken the part of infidelity,

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delity, let us always discriminate between wit and argument, so as to be amused only by the wit, and remain unshaken in our faith till the fortrefs of it is battered by the main force of superior and commanding reason. Christianity has stood like a rock of ages amidst the waves of the sea, for many centuries, against every attack whether of wit or of argument, and, under the Divine Providence, there is every reason to believe that it shall stand till time itself shall be absorbed in eternity. Woe to those who have misemployed the talents they possessed in subverting the main column which supports the fabric of human felicity.



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

